

## French mission attacked in Rabat

RABAT (AP) — Police arrested a bearded, unidentified man Monday after he tried to set fire to the French consulate in Marrakesh, said Michel Mechanemof, a French official. The man, said to be in his 30s, was apprehended by security agents and turned over to Moroccan police. The fire in a first-floor room of the consulate was quickly put out and caused little damage. According to Mr. Mechanemof, the man cried "Allah Akbar" after starting the fire. He appeared to have been coming from a nearby mosque. Mr. Mechanemof said. No motivation was given for the arson attack, but it followed by one day the massive allied land attack against Iraq. Though Morocco has sent 1,200 troops to join the multi-national coalition arrayed against Iraq, popular sentiment in the country is strongly on the side of Baghdad.

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# Iraq orders pullout from Kuwait, but U.S. says war goes on

## Allied forces seen trying to engage withdrawing Iraqis

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ HAS ordered its troops out of Kuwait in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 660, Baghdad Radio announced early Tuesday, and first reports said the army had started the withdrawal.

However, the United States, which is leading the allied war against Iraq, said it had no formal information of the Iraqi decision and that the "war continues."

Baghdad Radio, monitored by the Associated Press in the Iraqi capital, Reuters in Nicosia and the British Broadcasting Corporation in London, said Iraqi troops would withdraw to positions they held before the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

"Orders have been issued to our armed forces to withdraw in an organized manner to the positions they held prior to Aug. 1, 1990," the radio broadcast said.

"This is regarded as a practical compliance with (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 660," said the broadcast, which attributed the statement to the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

Shortly after the announcement, it was reported in New York that the Soviet Union had formally submitted a proposal for an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

American Cable News Network (CNN) television reported senior U.S. administration

sources as saying large numbers of Iraqi tanks, trucks and equipment were seen heading north out of Kuwait.

But White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Iraq had made no contact with the United States about any withdrawal plans.

"We don't consider there is anything to respond to," he told reporters. "The war goes on."

CNN said it was told U.S. forces were trying to engage the withdrawing troops with helicopters and aircraft but bad weather was preventing a full engagement.

Asked why American forces were trying to engage apparently retreating forces, an official said U.S. forces were trying to destroy them since this would spur them along in terms of any further withdrawal.

CNN reported senior administration officials as saying this activity, if it is a withdrawal, still did not meet terms for an end to the fighting since there had been no notification to the United Nations, CNN reported.

Baghdad Radio broadcast the statement after two days of a massive ground offensive launched by the United States and its allies.

"Our armed forces which have proven their ability to fight and stand fast will confront any attempt to harm it while it is

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## Gorbachev asks Bush to reconsider offensive

Combined agency dispatches

THE ALLIED GROUND offensive won general political support from the members of the coalition on Monday, with disapproval coming from China, India and others. But many supporters worried that U.S. objectives may go beyond Kuwait's borders.

Allied nations strongly backed the assault, which began early Sunday. Many newspapers joined their governments in blaming Iraq.

In Australia, Melbourne police arrested 30 people when about 100 anti-war demonstrators formed a chain around the Commonwealth Defence Department Centre Monday. More than 1,000 protesters marched in San Francisco.

Along with the Soviet Union, which said the U.S. had missed a "very real chance for peace," China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia were among the nations to withhold support for the assault. All said they regretted it.

"Ending the conflict through military means will only leave deep scars and the post-war situation will be full of difficulties," said Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas.

Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who has criticised

## Denunciation of allied assault gains strength

Combined agency dispatches

THE ISRAELI ARMY Monday destroyed eight ships in Gaza's Jahaliya refugee camp that it claimed here used as cover by Palestinians attacking a nearby army base with stones and firebombs. One ship was used as a doctor's office and another as a bookstore.

Soldiers also demolished a Palestinian home in Beit Awa village in the occupied West Bank because the owner's 22-year-old son threw firebombs at an army patrol and the home of a suspected collaborator, the army said.

Curfew orders confining Palestinians to their homes were lifted for 10 or 11 daylight hours Monday in most large towns in the occupied territories, as well as in some Gaza refugee camps, the army and Palestinian reports said.

Still, curfews kept tens of thousands of Palestinians cooped up in their homes in villages and camps. Some have been under curfew since the start of the war Jan. 17, with the exception of a few hours each week to go out and shop for food.

All Palestinians in the occupied territories were put under curfew at the start of the war for fear of disruptions in support of Iraq.

The army began to ease the curfews last week after predictions of widespread violence proved false, but then reimposed the restrictions on many areas Sunday with the opening of the allied ground assault.

Reporters said the curfews were lifted during the day Monday in the West Bank towns of Bethlehem, Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarem, Ramallah and Jericho.

Decision leaving the door open for technically sophisticated terrorism — there will always be a rich state to back them," a Soviet diplomat told Reuters.

Before Sunday's allied ground assault, Iraq dropped the linkage between a withdrawal from Kuwait and an Israeli pullout from the occupied territories.

A senior European diplomat said there was a danger the Palestinian issue could not only be neglected but bypassed.

"This would be a terrible mistake because it would leave a

festering sore," he said, adding this world in turn lead to extremism.

Mr. Badran said there had to be understanding on the Israeli side "that this cause which has not been settled for decades will remain a threat to peace, security and stability in the region."

U.N. resolutions had to be applied equally throughout the Middle East, not merely to the Gulf and Kuwait, he said.

"If this problem is not solved after the Gulf crisis, this is going to be a catastrophe. I believe that

the Israeli people as a people want stability and peace... and I hope these feelings will spread to the ruling elite."

Ordinary Palestinians received with dismay a Soviet Gulf peace plan which dropped linkage with the Palestinian issue.

"Once again the Palestinians were put on the shelf. We were hoping, but as usual we were deceived... we got nothing out of the whole Gulf issue and more of our people were displaced," said Jamila Atiyah in the Baqa'a camp on Amman's outskirts.

## Arafat: Napalm justifies retaliation

MADRID (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said in a radio interview Monday the use of napalm by allied forces justified retaliation in kind by Iraq, which has threatened to use chemical weapons. "It is clear that the American troops and the alliance have used napalm... which is internationally forbidden," Mr. Arafat told Spain's state-run Radio Nacional in Tunis. "This way they are given Iraqi forces the motives and the right to use the same arms in retaliation," he said. A U.S. marine corps spokesman said last week that napalm, a highly inflammable petroleum jelly for bombs and flame-throwers, was being used to destroy oil-filled trenches dug by the Iraqis to stop allied troops. Mr. Arafat told the radio all efforts must be made to stop the war. He said British and U.S. forces had mentioned the possibility of using nuclear weapons, and that both sides were more than likely to use nuclear or chemical arms. "For this we have to work hard, because it means a real catastrophe, a real disaster for the whole world," Mr. Arafat said.

## Iraqi missile kills at least 12 U.S. soldiers

Combined agency dispatches

AN IRAQI missile slammed into a U.S. military barracks Monday night killing at least 12 American servicemen and wounding more than 50, witnesses and Saudi Television reported.

The long missile smashed into a two-story billet housing U.S. servicemen in Khobar City in eastern Saudi Arabia on the outskirts of Dhahran, site of the main U.S. military base for the Gulf war.

"There are at least 12 American servicemen dead," a U.S. military policeman told reporters at the scene before herding them away from the area. He refused to comment further.

Saudi Television and the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) put the death toll at 12 with more than 50 soldiers wounded.

Other reports spoke of up to 40 dead and wounded. U.S. officials said they had no casualty figures.

The U.S. central command in Riyadh, the Saudi capital south of Dhahran, said it appeared the Scud missile may have broken up in flight, scattering debris over the Dhahran area and killing and injuring an undetermined number of people in the barracks.

One witness said the missile struck the barracks as some servicemen were having dinner.

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## Thousands of Egyptian students denounce war

Combined agency dispatches

POLICE USED batons and tear gas to disperse thousands of angry university students staging anti-war demonstrations Monday as Egyptian ground troops reportedly made new advances against Iraqi positions inside Kuwait.

A statement issued by a military source and carried by Egyptian television claimed Egyptian forces have advanced about 30 kilometres inside Kuwait from their Saudi Arabian positions at Hafir Al Batin and destroyed Iraqi armoured cars and artillery units.

Egyptian gunners also fired more than 1,200 tons of ammunition on Iraqi positions in the first 24 hours of the allied ground offensive, another military source told the Associated Press.

Police clashed violently with students demonstrating at two universities in Cairo to protest the ground offensive and Egypt's participation in it.

At Cairo University, Egypt's largest, about 3,000 students marched, chanting slogans to rhythmic clapping. The chants included: "Iraq will not die," "Shame: we have sold Egypt for dollars," and "Beloved Iraq, hit Tel Aviv (with missiles)."

As in previous protests, the demonstrators waved President Hosni Mubarak of the consequences of his actions. They shouted: "Mubarak Mubarak, the reviewing stand awaits you."

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## Coalition claims push, low casualties

Combined agency dispatches

ALLIED FORCES driving into Kuwait and southern Iraq captured 20,000 Iraqis and destroyed hundreds of tanks while suffering only light losses, spokesmen said on Monday. Iraq said the number was exaggerated.

Iraq said its forces were locked in fierce battles with the U.S.-led forces along the whole Gulf war front, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

Although earlier reports said the U.S. central command was reaching its blackout on coalition movements, there was no indication by Monday evening that the rule had been eased.

Allied officials, at news briefings, issued glowing reports of the coalition's progress in the ground war. They also pointed to what they said were growing numbers of oil field fires.

"We will prevail. Kuwait will soon be free," U.S. President George Bush declared in Washington.

The allies continued to release surprisingly low casualty totals for the early going of the ground war. Five Arabs and four Americans killed in action.

More than 15,000 U.S. marines massed off the Kuwaiti coast keeping several battalions of Iraqis guessing about where and when they will launch an amphibious assault.

But on Monday, apart from

helicopter night reconnaissance missions designed to confuse the Iraqi defenders, the massive amphibious force remained at sea.

Pilots and marine officials in Dhahran said the Iraqi forces along the coast were encamped in fortifications protected by a network of minefields, barbed wire and oil-filled trenches.

Marine officers said there was a heavy concentration of mines around two major islands off Kuwait, Bubiyan and Failaka.

Despite contrary reports, military sources said Failaka had not been taken by the United States and its allies. The island commands the sea entrance to Kuwait City.

Lieutenant-General Walter Boomer, commander of all U.S. marines in the Gulf war, predicted allied victory within days.

After being briefed by 2nd division commanders on the progress of the land offensive to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait, he told reporters: "It's not over 'til it's over. There's nobody going around saying how great it is, how great we are."

But he predicted the massive allied assault would be over "in a matter of days, not weeks."

French Brig. Gen. Daniel Gazeau said French troops penetrated 150 kilometres inside Kuwait and took more than 3,000 Iraqi prisoners. And British army Colonel Barry Stevens said Britain's 1st armoured division had made its way through what he called the Iraqi "obstacle belt" and were making "very good advances."

Mr. Bush said the war was "on course and on schedule." At the same time, he cautioned against excessive optimism, and said "there are battles yet to come and casualties to be borne."

"We must guard against euphoria... but make no mistake, we will prevail. Kuwait will soon be free and U.S. forces will return soon to respect and thanks of a grateful nation," Mr. Bush said

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## "Fabricated"

AMMAN (J.T.) — A film shot by an American television network showing Iraqi prisoners of war (PoWs) is fabricated, according to a Jordanian television Monday.

He said he managed to recognize his uncle who is a soldier with one of the Arab forces employed in Saudi Arabia among the alleged PoWs. The witness refused to give the name of his uncle nor the location of his unit.

Mr. Bush said the war was "on course and on schedule." At the same time, he cautioned against excessive optimism, and said "there are battles yet to come and casualties to be borne."

"We must guard against euphoria... but make no mistake, we will prevail. Kuwait will soon be free and U.S. forces will return soon to respect and thanks of a grateful nation," Mr. Bush said



## Gazan holding Jordanian document off to Libya

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Palestinian from Gaza carrying a Jordanian-issued laissez passer flew to Tripoli Monday in what was seen as the first watershed case of acceptance by Libya of Palestinians stranded in Kuwait as a result of non-recognition of travel documents in the wake of the crisis in the Gulf.

The Gazan, identified as Adel Ibrahim Abdu Issawi, flew to the Libyan capital on a Royal Jordanian (RJ) flight early Monday, sources said. The passage was arranged by an international relief agency in charge of repatriating evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait following the Gulf crisis.

The Gazan originally held an Egyptian laissez passer, issued to him on the basis that all Gazans were the responsibility of Egypt, which controlled the Gaza strip until it was occupied by Israel in 1967. He arrived in Jordan from Kuwait in the third week of November and travelled to Egypt on his way home to the strip, but was denied entry by the Egyptian authorities, who also seized the laissez passer and expelled him back to Jordan, the sources said.

Egypt maintains that it would allow holders of such documents to enter its territory

only with prior security permission. Israeli regulations stipulate that every Palestinian leaving the West Bank or Gaza return using the route by which they left. Egypt's Al Arish in the Sinai in the case of Gazans holding Egyptian documents.

Between 45,000 to 60,000 Gazans are believed to be stranded in Kuwait as a result of the Egyptian and Israeli positions. Jordanian officials confirmed that in the absence of any guarantee of entry to Egypt they had to turn away some Gazans who wanted to enter the Kingdom on their way home through Egypt.

Meanwhile, doubts remained on what arrangement or condition was attached to the Libyan offer. Diplomatic sources and international relief agencies said they doubted Libya was willing to grant nationality to the stranded Palestinians and other Arabs which it is offering to accept.

At the same time, they also noted that Libya stood in need of skilled personnel to accelerate its pace of development.

"Almost every Palestinian in Kuwait is skilled in one way or another," noted a diplomat pointing out that the Palestinian community in the emirate is credited with playing a key role in developing the infrastructure of the country.

But the support that the Palestinians extended to Iraq

in the Gulf crisis has burned bridges and many Palestinians have voiced fears for their safety if the toppled emir regime were to be reinstated in Kuwait.

Analysts did not expect Libya to step into the explosive minefield of "absorbing" the Gazans as Libyan nationals and set a precedent which would contribute to Israel's theory that there is no place for a Palestinian state in Palestine.

No official was available at the Libyan embassy to comment on the affair Monday, but an embassy source has confirmed without elaboration his country's offer to accept Arabs stranded in Kuwait.

However, another diplomatic source said Tripoli was attaching no visa restrictions to holders of Arab laissez passer, including Gazans holding Egyptian documents.

"If the Libyans were being choosy about the people it would allow in they could have attached a visa condition, which offers the visa issuing authority a chance to screen the applicants," noted an international relief official. "In the absence of such a condition, it is obvious that Libya is offering the same kind of arrangement that Kuwait was offering: a place to work and reside pending the resolution of the Palestinian problem."

## Americans mark ground war with prayers, vigils and tears

CHICAGO (R) — A few days ago Harry Cameron picked up a morning paper to find a front-page picture from Saudi Arabia of his marine son smiling from the back of a truck headed towards the Kuwait border.

On Sunday, Mr. Cameron and ordinary Americans from California to New York wondered where their sons and daughters were as the Gulf war ground offensive brought loved ones face-to-face with Iraqi opponents.

There were prayers, tears, special church services and shows of support. There were also protests and arrests.

"I was glued to the television. I was waking up during the night," said Mr. Cameron who lives in a Chicago suburb. "We're very proud of him," he said of his 21-year-old son, Marine Corporal Paul Cameron.

In the small southern California town of Twentynine Palms, part of the sprawling Camp Pendleton marine base, churches were packed.

At least seven marines from the town have already died in the war and there was an unspoken acceptance among the people in the quiet streets that more deaths were inevitable.

"We can just pray and hope things will turn out for the best," said William Clayman as he headed to church.

"People don't want to say too much in case things get worse," said the town's mayor, Christian Bohler.

In Los Angeles, Maria Nelson, an army reservist whose husband is stationed in the war zone, said, "I'm just sorry it had to come to this, but it was inevitable. I just pray my husband comes home."

At Fort Stewart in Georgia, Glenda Dotson, whose husband David is a tank commander with the 24th infantry, choked back tears.

"We're keeping our lights lit for them and praying for them," she said. "The people here want it to end — they think it's nonsense... I'd love for my husband to be home."

In Miami, mass transit workers during the weekend began to unroll 21,000 metres of bright yellow ribbon, to be tied around concrete pillars that support nearly 36.6 kilometres elevated rail line throughout the city.

Evelyn Wrasse of Miami, whose son Sergeant Richard Martin is assigned to an M-1 tank in the battle zone, said, "I'm sure the president has all our boys in mind. I just hope and pray this will be over quickly and that my son, and everyone else's sons, will be safe."

Elaine Smith, of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, said, "I'm a basket case." He 23-year-old son Scott has been with a marine unit for the past three months at the Kuwait border and her kitchen wall is draped with a map of the Gulf.

In Memphrooke, Massachusetts, 50 kilometres south of Boston, Louis Duchini gathered his family around him Sunday to show support for his son, Daniel, a marine in the war zone.

"Not knowing, especially what is going on, is tough," said Mr. Duchini.

In Washington where President George Bush and top U.S. officials went to church to pray, 15 anti-war demonstrators were arrested, some of them for making too much noise outside the church where Mr. Bush and the others attended services.

But there was no immediate demonstration of outrage from groups which had been pushing for peace. Some planned demonstrations Monday in Chicago and other cities during business hours.

## Soviets brace for unrest within their borders

MOSCOW (AP) — As President Mikhail Gorbachev made final efforts to avert a ground war in the Gulf, some voiced fears that such fighting could trigger a pro-Iraq backlash by Muslims in the Soviet Union.

"He (Mr. Gorbachev) undertook peace partly to pacify the Muslim population," Vladimir Nosenko, a Middle East analyst with the Institute for World Economics and International Relations, said Saturday.

"Now he can say he did his best to help Iraq, but when the war starts there be an anti-American trend in the whole Arab World, including the Soviet Union," he said.

The Kremlin has weathered two years of secessionist and ethnic unrest in its southern regions, and some militant Muslims

have openly supported their brethren in Iraq and Iran.

Soviet Muslims number an estimated 80 million in the country of 283 million. Tensions could worsen if Iraqi casualties increase dramatically during a ground war.

Inan Kaziy Ravil-Khazrat, leader of Moscow's sole mosque, said Soviet Muslims were divided in their support for Iraq, but united in opposition to the anti-Iraq coalition.

"This war is being waged to destroy completely Saddam Hussein and Iraq, Mr. Ravil Khazrat said. "They want not only to destroy Iraq's policies, but its cities and people."

On Saturday, Mr. Gorbachev launched a vigorous telephone campaign to leaders of the anti-Iraq coalition to try and salvage

a peace plan that was accepted by Iraq but rejected by the United States.

But his efforts appeared futile. Iraq ignored U.S. President George Bush's Saturday deadline for Iraq to start leaving Kuwait, and Mr. Bush said the war would go ahead as scheduled.

Mr. Nosenko told the Associated Press that unrest in the Soviet Union could include "terrorism and anti-military actions" by Muslims, including efforts to seize Soviet weaponry to help defend Iraq or provoke Soviet military involvement.

Col. Gen. Vladimir Litvinov, commander of Soviet anti-aircraft forces, warned Thursday that nationalist unrest could "seriously interfere with protecting the Soviet Union's southern borders," the state news agency

TASS reported. Mr. Gorbachev likely will be trying to end the war and prevent a total Iraqi defeat, steering a middle route between the West and his own generals who want to block U.S. domination and keep Saddam Hussein in power.

"I think our generals prefer to save Saddam as a future partner," Mr. Nosenko said.

Assuming his diplomatic initiative fails, Mr. Gorbachev may face demands by the military to take a harder line towards the allied coalition. But observers expected him to stick with the allies.

"Gorbachev is making some concessions to the military, but that doesn't mean he is guided by it," Nodary Simoniya, deputy director of the institute, told the AP.

## Smoke from oil fire spreads over central Gulf

BAHRAIN (AP) — A thick gray haze blanketed Bahrain for the second day Monday as smoke from torched Kuwaiti oil wells blew south with a heavy petroleum stench.

The smoke hampered allied bombing missions but did not slow ground troops, according to reports from U.S. military commanders in Saudi Arabia.

World residents have been telephoning environmental bureaus and embassies to check whether the lingering fallout was harmful.

In the arid region, rain is always welcome. But Dr. Mahmoud Al Aital, an adviser with Bahrain's health ministry, said he hoped there would be no rain these days.

"The danger lies in its turning into acid rain which would affect

buildings," he said. But the assured inhabitants through a newspaper statement that only the ill could develop problems and that the government would be ready with emergency plans.

Island resident Bob Graffham from London said he noticed the haze for several days but "the kerosene lamp smell" started Sunday.

U.S. Ambassador Charles H. Foster told Americans at a war-dens meeting not to worry about the gray cloud-cover and said it was not harmful to breathe.

Walter Vreeland, a consultant at Bahrain's Environmental Protection Committee (EPC) said there were a lot of hydrocarbons in the air.

"We are trying to do a test on them right now, however we are not capable of monitoring this

type of air pollution," he said. Some residents complained of headaches and nausea.

Bahrain is 350 kilometres from Kuwait.

Almost 200 oil wells are said to have been set ablaze before the U.S. led multinational forces began their pre-dawn land offensive against Iraq Sunday.

The EPC consultant advised anyone having to stay outside for prolonged periods of time to place a handkerchief or other protection over the mouth and nose, especially asthmatics.

"It's probably harmful in the long term," said Mr. Vreeland. "This could go on for months if the wells keep burning and the wind comes out of the northwest, as it usually does."

Khaled Fakhr, the EPC's vice chairman, has urged environmental

protection agencies in both the United States and France to supply Bahrain's committee with more information.

Qatar, about 32 kilometres south of Bahrain, reported reduced atmospheric visibility.

Officials in the United Arab Emirates, further south, pacified residents by stating that the thick black smoke and awful stench were not having an effect over general health.

Environmental officials as well as Bahrain's residents have been fearing the worst as the largest oil slick in history was calculated to envelop the tiny island within weeks of its inception.

However many feel that the hydrocarbon pollution emitted from the burning wells could create a worse environmental disaster.

## Egyptians

(Continued from page 1)

and stoned policemen who restricted them to campus. Sources said police dispersed the students with nightsticks.

Mr. Muharak met with his education minister apparently to discuss the university trouble.

On Sunday, police also fired tear-gas at hundreds of stone-throwing students protesting against the Gulf war but witnesses said Monday's clash was far more intense.

One protester said some 5,000 students had earlier gathered in the university chanting "death to America, death to Israel."

Streets leading to the campus were sealed off by police but students were later allowed to leave. More students were still inside the university, witnesses said.

Police used tear-gas to force the students back into the university to prevent them from marching onto nearby streets.

Marchers and public demonstrations are banned according to emergency law in force since the assassination of Sadat in 1981.

In Algiers, about 1,000 students and professors staged a sit-in in front of parliament Monday to support Iraq and demand Algeria cut ties with the U.S.-led allies.

Former President Ahmad Ben Bella joined the students who blocked traffic on the main port-side boulevard shouting, "Enough hypocrisy, the people demand a commitment by the army alongside Iraq," and "fight them like valiant believers."

One student burned an effigy of U.S. President George Bush wrapped in an American flag.

National Assembly President Abdul Aziz Belkadem said he would convey the students' demands to President Chadli Benjedid.

Public opinion throughout North Africa backs Baghdad and President Benjedid Sunday denounced the allied land offensive as a savage attempt to destroy Iraq.

But some opposition groups including Mr. Ben Bella's Movement for Democracy in Algeria have demanded stronger action.

Foreign Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali has ruled out a break in

economic ties with the allies, saying it will not help the Iraqi people. Algeria is a major supplier of natural gas to France, Italy and the United States.

Iranian-backed Iraqi opposition groups condemned the land offensive as aimed at destroying Iraq instead of freeing Kuwait.

"We strongly denounce this destructive campaign," said the Islamic Daawa (Call) party in a statement issued in Beirut.

"Kuwait was nothing but a pretext used by the United States to destroy Iraqi military and economic power and impose its hegemony not only on the Islamic region but on the whole world," it added.

Daawa called on international organisations to intervene to "end the bloodshed and destruction and halt the massacre of our people."

The Higher Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, another Iranian-based opposition group, said the allies wanted to finish Baghdad, humiliate Iraqis and endanger its political future.

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has accused the United States and its allies of seeking to destroy Iraq and humiliate Arabs, the Libyan news agency reported Monday. Colonel Qadhafi sent messages to the U.N. secretary-general, the president of the U.N. General Assembly and leaders of non-aligned nations, the news agency JANA reported.

"Iraq is the victim of a deliberate operation of humiliation," JANA quoted Col. Qadhafi's message as saying. "It is more than clear that what is happening now is not aimed at liberating Kuwait but is part of a process of the destruction of Iraq and is not based on the so-called U.N. resolutions."

"It is an operation which seeks to humiliate the Arab Nation before the world through aggression against Iraq."

He said the allies should have given Iraq more time to withdraw from Kuwait, noting that Iraq had agreed to pullout its troops under a Soviet peace plan.

Mauritania and Sudan condemned the ground offensive, in the Gulf war, also saying the goal was not just to liberate Kuwait but to destroy Iraq.

The offensive "goes beyond the aim of liberating Kuwait and

seeks the destruction of the human, economic, scientific and military capacities of Iraq," said a joint communiqué released in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott.

Sudan's President Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir and Mauritania's President Maouya Ould Sid Ahmad Taya called on the international community to bring a halt to the conflict as soon as possible.

## Israelis

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offices of the Arab Studies Society headed by Mr. Hussaini, 51. Those closures are in force for another five months.

All closures can be renewed by the army. Jerusalem police carried out the orders on Sunday night, searching the offices, seizing documents and changing locks.

Mr. Hussaini, who has been held without trial for months at a time during the 38-month-old Palestinian uprising, said one office was for tourism studies, maps and public relations. He said the other was a library and documentation centre.

In the West Bank village of Birkin, 21-year-old Husam Obeid was wounded in a clash with Israeli troops and died when an ambulance taking him to a hospital in nearby Jenin overturned, the military command said.

But Arab hospital officials in Jenin said that Obeid died as a result of a head wound suffered in the confrontation and not because of any injury caused by the road accident.

## Denunciation

(Continued from page 1)

Some editorials in Monday newspapers also reflected uneasiness that the military solution might go beyond freeing Kuwait to getting rid of President Saddam Hussein and imposing a post-war structure.

"The United States should refrain from conducting military actions that might lead to an expanded interpretation of the U.N. resolutions," the Japan Economic Journal warned.

"We should not make this ground war the war for Amer-

icans' instead of the benefit of the U.N.'s function to maintain peace."

IRNA said Gandhi, leader of India's Congress party, was visiting Iran "to become oriented with peace plan and viewpoints of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on ways to end the 'Persian' Gulf war."

Upon his arrival from Moscow, where he met with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev for talks on the war, Mr. Gandhi was accompanied by several members of the Congress Party and welcomed by Vice-President Anwarul Karim Khan and Foreign Ministry officials, the news agency said.

It said Mr. Gandhi expressed regret over the start of the land war in Kuwait and said failure of international efforts to stop the war will have negative impacts on the region.

"Establishment of a new system in the region will have negative repercussions for regional countries like Iran and India," the agency quoted Mr. Gandhi as saying. "That is why stopping the war and establishing a regional order and security is among our aims."

Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock would on a two-day visit and left the Iranian capital saying his government welcomed all initiatives aimed at ending the war," the agency said.

IRNA also said a scheduled visit to Baghdad by a special committee of the Non-Aligned Movement was cancelled because of "technical problems."

It was scheduled to leave Tehran for Baghdad Monday morning to discuss a peace proposal with President Saddam.

The committee would meet in Tehran "to examine issues related to the 'Persian' Gulf crisis and peace initiatives to end the current war in the region and also to adopt a final decision on the NAM future activities with regards to the crisis," the source added.

President Rafsanjani met members of the committee Sunday and wished them success in their quest for peace.

"The readiness of members of special committee to travel to Baghdad indicates the seriousness of the movement to end the Gulf crisis," IRNA had quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying.

## Pravda accuses U.S. of seeking supremacy in Gulf war

MOSCOW (R) — The official newspaper of the ruling Soviet Communist Party said Monday a drive for world hegemony behind the U.S.-led allied ground assault on Iraqi forces.

In reports from the Middle East, Pravda also accused Western nations of waging war to jump-start their ailing economies and said the complete destruction of Iraq was the real aim of allied war-planners.

The headline blast reflected increasing confidence among conservatives in the Communist Party, who have put pressure on President Mikhail Gorbachev not to throw in his lot with the U.S.-led alliance fighting Iraq.

It also underscored the potential threat to Mr. Gorbachev from right-wing critics if the ground war drags on for weeks.

"(The war) is waged first of all for the ambitions of the USA toward sole leadership of the world," Pravda said in a report from Cairo.

"And (it is waged) to improve the health of the economies of the West through the transfusion from the rich Gulf countries of

many millions for military action."

Diplomatic efforts to force Iraq, formerly Moscow's closest Middle East ally, to quit Kuwait forged an unprecedented alliance between the superpowers. But the ground offensive has put that link in doubt.

A leading Soviet democrat said a long ground war could undermine Mr. Gorbachev's position at home and tempt him to abandon the anti-Iraqi coalition.

"The war will produce many victims and at the same time place in question the position of the Soviet Union," Sergei Stankovich, the deputy mayor of Moscow and a leading opposition figure, told a news conference.

"There is growing pressure in the Soviet Union to stop supporting the multinational coalition. This internal pressure is becoming unbearable for our president," Mr. Stankovich said.

Moscow said Sunday it regretted the U.S.-led allies had started a land assault and insisted it was not too late for the United Nations to end the Gulf war by diplomatic means.

A government statement said a Soviet peace plan worked out with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz Friday had opened the way to a peaceful settlement but "the instinct for a military solution won through."

Pravda said the "liberation of Kuwait" was a pretext for eliminating Iraq as a regional power and Washington's call for a "new world order" must not be imposed by force.

"Will the new world order be imposed by fire and sword? It's all the worse that peaceful means were clearly not exhausted. But the allies under U.S. leadership preferred amputation therapy."

In a separate report from Baghdad, Pravda said Iraq's economy had been shattered by the allied bombardment. And it said allied demands for a swift pull-out from Kuwait were deliberately too tough.

"As it turns out, the predication of those who believed the allies' aim was not only to liberate Kuwait but also to destroy Iraq's military and industrial might is being proved correct," the newspaper said.

## A look at the forces arrayed in the Gulf

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than one million allied and Iraqi soldiers confront each other in the Gulf war as the ground offensive begins.

The United States mounted a massive ground assault against Iraqi troops in Kuwait beginning at about 0100 GMT, a Defence Department source said.

Iraq's army had 28 to 33 divisions in Kuwait, totalling 545,000 troops, when the conflict began Jan. 17. They were equipped with 4,200 tanks, 2,800 armoured personnel carriers and 3,100 artillery pieces.

A long line of Iraqi infantry is dug in along Kuwait's border with Saudi Arabia, backed up by divisions of Iraqi tanks. And 150,000 troops of the Republican Guard are held in reserve on the northern Iraqi-Kuwait border.

The U.S. army has 295,000 troops in Saudi Arabia while the Marines have 94,000 including an amphibious force of 18,000 men

on ships in the Gulf.

Other allied countries sent 205,000 troops to the Gulf to face the Iraqis.

The United States has 2,000 tanks, more than 2,000 pieces of artillery and 2,000 armoured personnel carriers on the ground in Saudi Arabia.

The allies' front-line soldiers: — Ten U.S. army and marine divisions, more than 160,000 combat troops. The U.S. combat forces include two divisions of airborne troops, three of armoured and three of mechanised infantry. The Marines have two divisions on land and 18,000 men on ships in the Gulf.

The British 1st armoured division with more than 160 Challenger tanks. The British force includes the 7th armoured brigade with 9,500 troops, successors to the famous "Desert Rats" of World War II.

— The French Sixth Light Armoured division with 12,000

men. The French deployed a 4,000-man French rapid action force, including the foreign legion's 3rd infantry regiment.

— Some 36,000 Egyptian troops with 480 tanks, paratroopers, commandos, chemical warfare specialists and infantry.

Syria's 45,000-man Ninth Armoured Division, with some 270 Soviet T-62 tanks.

The Gulf Cooperation Council's rapid deployment force of up to 10,000 troops. The council force has 330 combat aircraft, 800 tanks and 150,000 troops from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait.

The war so far has been fought largely by U.S. air force and navy pilots flying bombing missions over Iraq and Kuwait.

The navy has 82,000 sailors on more than 115 ships in the Gulf and flying 450 fighter jets. The air force has 56,000 personnel and 800 combat aircraft.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### PRAYER TIMES

06:47 ..... Fajr  
06:52 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
11:49 ..... Dhuhur  
15:02 ..... 'Asr  
17:33 ..... Maghrib  
18:50 ..... 'Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, 5-wallah Tel. 810740.  
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785, 685326.  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.  
De la Salle Church Tel. 601757  
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625441.  
Anglican Church Tel. 623383, Tel. 628453.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771231.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772361.  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.  
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 611295.  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The country will come under the effect of unstable weather conditions Tuesday. Therefore, there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain that might be accompanied by thunder.

Min./max. temp.  
Amman ..... 4 / 14  
Aqaba ..... 12 / 24  
Dhahran ..... 3 / 16  
Jordan Valley ..... 10 / 21

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 16, Aqaba 24. Humidity readings: Amman 84 per cent, Aqaba 32 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY  
AMMAN:  
Dr. Wael Kureishi .....



## Study predicts acute water shortage by 2005

AMMAN (J.T.) — A working paper, to be submitted to a five-day symposium on environmental education which was opened here Saturday, warns that Jordan is bound to face an acute shortage of water supply by the year 2005. The paper noted that the greatest amount of rain water which falls evaporates on Jordan.

Dr. Safian Al Tal, director of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and author of the paper to the symposium, said that the country's water consumption stood at 134 million cubic metres in 1986, rising to 150 million in 1987 and increasing to become 164 million in 1988.

In 1989 Jordan's estimated consumption reached 180 million cubic metres of water.

According to Dr. Tal, the amount will reach 390 million by the year 2005.

He said that the Kingdom would face by the year 2005 a shortage estimated at 143 million cubic metres of water of which 75 million would be in drinking water.

The agricultural sector's needs up nearly 80 per cent of the total amount of water found under ground or on the surface, he added.

Dr. Tal's paper noted the total amounts of rain water falling on Jordan annually range between 6,000 million to 11,500 million cubic metres, but 85 per cent of the total amount evaporates while the rest finds its way to wadis, streams and rivers and feeds the underground reservoirs.

Tal said that treated water coming out from the waste water treatment plants located at Khirbet Al Samra, Jerash, Bakaa and Abu Nuseir flows towards the King Talal dam at the rate of nearly 44 million cubic metres and, like the whole amount of water stored in the dam, the treated water is used mainly for farming and agricultural purposes.

The symposium, organised by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), is focusing attention on means of curtailing pollution caused to water resources, soil and the atmosphere.

The organisers say that working papers constitute the basis of various ideas which are needed for inclusion in the textbooks of Jordan's public and private schools.

## Ground assault aborts Jordan's peace offensive

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri returned home Monday to pursue diplomatic moves from Amman towards an end to the Gulf war after his scheduled talks with European Community (EC) counterparts were interrupted by the launching of the allied ground assault against Iraq early Sunday.

"Due to recent developments and the start of the ground offensive against brotherly Iraq, I had to cut short my visit since part of my official discussions were on the need to support efforts for a political solution and the Soviet-Iraqi peace initiative," Mr. Masri told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, in an arrival statement.

Mr. Masri, who flew to Paris Thursday and met with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas Friday, was scheduled to meet on Monday in Luxembourg with the foreign ministers of Luxembourg, Italy and the Netherlands on the situation in the Gulf as well as EC relations with Jordan and the Arab World.

The three EC ministers — the "troika" — represent the immediately previous, present and future rotating chairmen of the community Council of Ministers. Their meetings with envoys of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the Israeli foreign minister have also been called off.

Mr. Masri had flown to London from Paris after his meeting with Mr. Dumas and was due in Luxembourg on Monday.

Mr. Masri had also scheduled meetings in Brussels with EC Commission President Jacques Delors and Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens and in Vienna with Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock later this week.

The main focus of these discussions was expected to be the last-minute Soviet initiative, which Iraq accepted but Washington rejected saying it did not represent Iraqi compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 to the letter.

Jordan welcomed the Soviet initiative and Iraq's positive response to it and had entertained high hopes that it could halt the war and herald a negotiated settlement of the conflict if properly followed up through European diplomatic channels. But the abrupt, obviously calculated, American move to set a 1700 GMT Saturday deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait and to launch the offensive six hours later preempted Jordan's follow-up efforts.

"We saw no point in pursuing the initiative any further at this point when the ground war had actually started," said a senior official, confirming that Jordan had requested the postponement of the meetings.

Another official said: "Everyone is now too preoccupied with his own country's involvement in the war to enter political discussions. No one is really ready to discuss political solutions when thousands of people are being killed or wounded in the war."

Ironically, notwithstanding the implications of the ground assault on Iraqi forces and the U.S. rejection of the Soviet initiative which could have forestalled the offensive, diplomats of European members of the coalition appeared to be relieved, at least in the short term, that the focus has shifted to the ground, away from the massive air attacks which have killed several thousands Iraqi civilians and destroyed a major part of Iraq's economic infrastructure since the war began.



Taher Al Masri

Jan. 17.

"We were shocked and surprised by the intensity of the attacks and the civilian casualties in the raids," said one diplomat, echoing similar sentiments voiced by several others. But, for obvious reasons, none of them wanted to be quoted by name.

"The destruction of Iraq was never one of the goals of the coalition as we were given to understand," said the diplomat.

"We had let our views be known to Washington and demanded that such attacks be immediately ended," said another diplomat, whose country is not part of the multinational invasion force but has sent warships to the region to enforce the international embargo on Iraq.

"For us the scenario was an army fighting an army in implementation of United Nations resolutions, but we are appalled that the entire concept has been twisted around into an operation which bears unmistakable signs of an ultimate objective — destruction of Iraq."

But this argument is easily countered by Jordanians.

"The European members of the coalition had 39 days to protest and make their stand clear," said a Jordanian analyst. "Are they now telling us they were not part of the blitzkrieg which wreaked havoc in Iraq and sought to destroy it as a country in addition to killing thousands of civilians?"

## Statement gives full backing to Iraq

## Arabiyyat heads parliament delegation to APU meetings

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is taking part in a meeting by the Arab Parliament Union (APU) which opened in Algiers Monday to discuss the situation in the Gulf and means to put an end to the aggression on Iraq.

Jordan's delegation, which left for the meeting Monday morning, is led by Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyyat who is scheduled to submit a working paper presenting an outline for a formula to end the war.

The APU meeting, which is expected to last several days, will discuss a policy to be adopted to support Iraq in its battle against the allied forces, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The agency said that the role of Arab and Islamic countries in reestablishing a lasting peace in the Gulf region would also be discussed at the meeting which is to be attended by parliamentary delegations from most of the Arab countries.

Arabiyyat is accompanied to the meeting by parliament members: Thougan Hindawi, Abdullah Ensur, Amin Shuqair, Ahmad Al Azalheh and Mohammad Fares Al Tarawneh.

As the delegation left, the Lower House of Parliament released a statement summing up the outcome of a session held Sunday evening during which the situation in the Gulf following the launching of the ground assault was discussed.

Describing the ground assault as a continuation of the U.S.-led aggression on Iraq, the statement said the war came to abort all

peace bids by Arab, Islamic and international circles to which Iraq had responded favourably in order to arrive at a peaceful settlement.

The ground assault is in flagrant violation of all international laws and world community norms as it aims at devastating Iraqi civilian population centres killing innocent children and old men and women, the statement said.

It added that the ground assault provides clear-cut evidence of the deep-rooted hatred in the hearts of the new colonialist powers and their agents in the region and their resentment to the Arab identity and Islamic culture, the statement noted.

It is high time for all Arab and Islamic countries which have suffered for a long time from the colonial powers and have been deceived by their misleading propaganda campaigns to realise that they are all targeted by the colonial powers; and that their institutions and their existence remain in constant danger, added the statement.

The statement voiced anger and condemnation at the U.S.-European aggression on the Arabs, and urged all the free and honourable people of the world to support justice and right and to back Iraq's stand.

The statement said that the parliament, which represents the Jordanian people, fully and absolutely supports the Iraqi leadership and armed forces with all its power and deeply appreciates the Iraqi people's sacrifices in defence of the Arab and Islamic nations.



Abdul Latif Arabiyyat

The statement also hailed the stand of His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian armed forces for their honourable support of their Iraqi brothers.

The statement appealed to all Arab and Islamic nations which aligned themselves behind the aggressors to reexamine their stand now that the colonial powers' aggressive aims were exposed.

It said that Arabs and Muslims everywhere ought to realise by now that the aggression was designed to destroy Iraq and to subject the Arabs and Muslims to humiliation; and that this was the only historic opportunity for the Arabs and Muslims to rise and defend their existence so that they can live with honour and dignity.

## HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

### 'Encounter' debates issue of stress today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Stress affecting people as a result of the ongoing Gulf war is the theme of Tuesday's special edition of "Encounter" on Jordan Television. Two local psychologists will be discussing the issue on the programme which is presented by Rami Khouri.

### Lawyers to strike in protest tomorrow

AMMAN (Petra) — The general secretariat of the Arab Lawyers Union Monday called on all Arab lawyers to strike Wednesday to protest the aggression on Iraq. President of the Jordanian Bar Association, Walid Abdul Hadi, said the union has called for stopping the war and halting hostilities in the Gulf region to give a chance for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

### Committee registers volunteers today

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Popular Forces Committee Monday called on Jordanian citizens to volunteer to join the Arab-Islamic Corp which it said would defend the dignity and honour of the nation and the Arab land and would fight with the people against aggression forces "led by the greatest satan, the U.S., and its agents in the region." The committee said registration to join the corp will start Tuesday Feb. 26 in various centres all over the Kingdom.

### Abu Taleb thanks APC director

AMMAN (Petra) — Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb Sunday sent a letter of thanks to Ali Nsour, director general of the Arab Potash Company (APC), and the company's staff for their JD 75,000 contribution to the People's Army.

### PSD chief attends graduation ceremony

AMMAN (Petra) — Public Security Department (PSD) Director Maj. Gen. Fadel Ali Fuhaid Sunday attended graduation ceremony of the primary course for university graduates. Fuhaid urged the graduates to live up to the challenges currently facing the Arab Nation and stressed the importance of adherence to the values and principles of the security profession. In Karak the People's Army Commander graduated a new batch of Peoples Army recruits and volunteers, who completed training in shooting, bomb throwing, stabbing, barrier climbing, and fist fighting.

### Parliament legal panel endorses laws

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament's Legal Committee held a meeting Sunday under the chairmanship of Hussein Mujalli, and endorsed four provisional laws, all of which relate to the Royal Jordanian. The committee also looked into some of the articles of the draft law on the Housing and Urban Development Corporation.

### Mifteh donates JD 100,000 to Islamic project

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Ibrahim Zaid Al Kilani received Monday a cheque for JD100,000 from Mr. Fiyadh Al Mifteh and his two sons, Aymaan and Aysar, as a donation to the construction project of the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry's Da'wa College. This donation, Kilani said, would be allocated for building a special wing for girls in the college. Mr. Mifteh and his two sons have recently donated JD100,000 for the People's Army.

### Seminar examines Gulf crisis

IRBID (Petra) — "Iraq's Steadfastness and Jordan's Honourable Stand" was the title of a seminar held Monday at Yarmouk University. Taking part in the seminar were retired Major General Ahmad Mahmoud Abdul Hadi, Prof. Ahmad Al Awasheh of the University of Jordan and Prof. Amin Muhanna of Yarmouk University. The participants reviewed the causes of the Gulf crisis which they attributed to the strategic location of the Arab World, oil wealth, Israel's security and the fear of the Arab World, a strong Arab state such as Iraq. The liberation of Kuwait was only a pretext to launch the unjust and long-awaited aggression against Iraq, they asserted. They warned of America's vicious designs aiming at establishing a new world order and called on the Arabs to unify their ranks to be able to face the challenges facing the Arab nation.

### Ghor Al Safi women hold public rally

KARAK (Petra) — Ghor Al Safi women's public committee for supporting Iraq and countering foreign aggression Monday organised a public rally for women in the southern Jordanian Karak region. Several women delivered speeches in which they lauded His Majesty King Hussein's honourable stands on Arab issues. The U.S.-led aggression on Iraq aims at destroying Iraq's power and dominating oil resources in the region rather than liberating Kuwait, they said.

### RSS issues study on rural development

AMMAN (Petra) — A study entitled "rural development and its administration in Jordan" has recently been issued by the Royal Scientific Society's (RSS) economic research centre. The study dealt with the projects and services available in the Jordanian countryside and the characteristics of the agricultural sector in Jordan.

## Moves quicken to reopen Amman, Tehran embassies

AMMAN (J.T.) — In pursuit of procedures to reopen Jordan's embassy in Tehran, a senior Foreign Ministry official leaves for the Iranian capital Tuesday to follow up a number of steps before the appointment of a Jordanian ambassador to head the mission.

Mohammad Ali Al Thaher, who will serve as charge d'affaires at the embassy in Tehran, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that he would embark on a procedure aimed at reopening the embassy, closed for the past ten years, and paving the ground for normal and strong relations between Jordan and Iran.

The two countries resumed diplomatic relations last month following high level diplomatic contacts between Amman and Tehran and the announcement was followed by visits to Tehran by a delegation of parliament deputies as well as Foreign Minis-

ter Taher Al Masri, with a subsequent visit to Jordan by a three-member parliamentary delegation earlier this month to discuss means of bolstering bilateral ties and ending the Gulf war.

The Iranian team brought to parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyyat a peace plan to contribute towards the settlement of the Gulf crisis.

Nara Ghian, a senior ministry official in Tehran arrived in Amman Monday morning to take charge of the task of reopening his country's embassy here.

Thaher described the moves as very positive development "at a time when Jordan and Iran are pursuing relentless efforts to end the devastating war in the Gulf."

"The reopening of the embassy in Tehran will no doubt have its very beneficial effect on bilateral cooperation in all fields, specially in economic and commercial sec-

tors," Thaher noted in his statement.

He said Jordan expects the two countries to exchange visits by official delegations in order to pave the ground for future economic and trade cooperation.

Earlier this month, it was announced here that Iran had signed an agreement for the purchase of Jordanian phosphate during 1991 at the total cost of \$66 million.

Despite non-existence of diplomatic relations over the past 10 years, Jordan and Iran maintained some form of trade links via Syria and Turkey.

A joint parliamentary statement issued here on Feb. 16 at the conclusion of an Iranian parliamentary team's visit said that the two countries have identified common ground for future cooperation, and held identical views with regard to the establishment of peace in the Gulf.

## Swedish Save the Children gives grant to NHF project

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Swedish non-governmental organisation Rädda Barnen (Save the Children) has allocated a 350,000 SEK, (\$63,000) grant to the Noor Al Hussein Foundation in support of Jordanian children and pregnant women in needy areas of the Kingdom.

A three month project, operated by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and financed by Save the Children will encompass purchase of nutritious foodstuffs, distribution of locally produced eggs and milk products,

manufacturing of "wholemeal biscuits" in a factory run by Jordanian women's organisations, purchase of medicines for children and of vitamins and chalybeate tablets for pregnant women, purchase of warm clothing for children and the start-up of an educational programme for children who have dropped out of school. All purchases will be made on the domestic market.

The goal of the project, says Mr. Hakhan Anderson of Rädda Barnen, is to quickly ameliorate the situation of women and chil-

dren who have become exposed to the current crisis in the Middle East.

The Swedish Save the Children carries half of the annual budget for the Noor Al Hussein Foundation in Amman. The additional \$63,000 grant comes partly from the organisation's own budget and partly from a gift from Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden who has, over the years, taken great personal interest in the welfare of children in Jordan.

## Withdrawal

(Continued from page 1)

carrying out the withdrawal order," the radio said.

The radio quoted INA as saying that Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz had informed the Soviet ambassador in Baghdad of the decision and requested that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev try to arrange a ceasefire.

"The foreign minister asked (the ambassador) to convey a message from leader President Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council to President (Mikhail) Gorbachev requesting him to exert efforts at the Security Council to achieve a ceasefire..." Baghdad Radio quoted INA as reporting.

Following is the text of Baghdad Radio's announcement aired

1.35 a.m. Tuesday (2235 GMT Monday).

"An official spokesman announced the following: 'In the name of God, the Almighty, the Compassionate'."

"Our armed forces have completed their duty of jihad, of rejecting compliance with the logic of evil, imposition and aggression. They have been engaged in an epic, valiant battle which will be recorded by history in letters of light."

"The leadership and stressed its acceptance to withdraw in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 when it agreed to the Soviet peace proposal. On this basis, and in compliance with this decision, orders were issued to the armed forces for an organised withdrawal to the positions in which they were before the 1st of August 1990."

"This is regarded as a practical compliance with Resolution 660."

"The spokesman emphasised that our forces, which have proved their fighting and steadfastness ability, will confront any attempt to attack them while implementing the withdrawal order."

"They will fight with force and courage to make their withdrawal organised and honourable."

"The Iraqi News Agency has learned that the foreign minister informed the Soviet ambassador of this decision, which constitutes a compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 660. The foreign minister asked that a message be conveyed from leader President Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council to President Gorbachev requesting him to exert efforts at the U.N. Security Council to achieve a ceasefire and put an end to the criminal behaviour of the United States and its allies and collaborators."



LOCAL: A consumer seems uncertain as to what kind of meat he will be buying considering the big difference in price (File photo)

## Cheating in meat quality prompts government to toughen checking

By Mamdouh Al Hawamdeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministries of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Supply are joining hands to put an end to malpractices by hutchers selling imported meat as locally-produced meat and charging JD 4 for each kilogramme.

Locally-produced meat sells at between JD 3.5 to JD 4 as only small lambs, not exceeding 18 kilograms in weight, are normally slaughtered for consumption, while the imported live sheep slaughtered in Jordan are normally 20 to 30 kilograms in weight.

Jordanians prefer the locally-produced meat but have no way of telling the difference, said Ministry of Supply officials.

Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Minister

Mohammad Addonb Al Zaben said that in conjunction with the Ministry of Supply, instructions went out to all slaughterhouses, in the provinces to stamp the imported live sheep slaughtered in the Kingdom with the same violet colour that marked fresh meat that used to be imported from Bulgaria and Romania by the Ministry of Supply.

The new measure is being adopted in the light of a memorandum to the Ministry of Supply reporting numerous complaints by consumers about the soaring prices of meat in general without any difference between the two types.

The absence of a distinguishing mark for each type and the non-existence of specified centre for selling these types as well as the numerous complaints have

prompted the two ministries to interfere and put an end to malpractices, said the minister.

"The government had recently reduced to JD 2 down from 8 a fee charged on the importation of each head of sheep, something which ought to bring down the price of imported live sheep and not vice versa," the minister noted.

Inspectors employed by the Ministry of Supply in various areas have been requested to ensure that the new regulations are heeded in full.

The Kingdom's annual meat consumption was estimated at 46,000 tonnes made up of 17 per cent of local fresh meat with the rest imported frozen or live.

The shortage is also made up by the importation of frozen poultry and fish.

## Gorbachev

(Continued from page 1)

hegemony and said the complete destruction of Iraq was the real aim of the allied forces. (see page 2).

The headline blast from the newspaper reflected growing confidence among Soviet conservatives as they pressure Mr. Gorbachev to distance himself from the U.S.-led coalition.

Mr. Yanayev told the semi-official Novosti news agency he was disappointed that the anti-Iraq alliance had rejected a peace plan worked out by Mr. Gorbachev and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz last week.

## Archaeological restoration work gets underway

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Antiquities is now busy itself mainly with restoration work at the various archaeological sites around the Kingdom. All archaeological digs have been postponed in view of the situation in the Gulf, according to the department director, Ghazi Bisheh.

Dr. Bisheh told the Jordan Times that Jordan normally had eight archaeological missions from foreign countries working here in conjunction with the Department of Antiquities but these have now vanished altogether.

Dr. Bisheh said that restoration

work is underway at the Greco-Roman city of Jerash in the north and the ancient Nabatean city of Petra in the south.

Bisheh told Reuters news agency earlier that at least 40 excavations were normally underway in the country at this time of the year.

He said that the Gulf war kept away foreign archaeologists from the United States, Britain, Germany and France. He added that foreign archaeological institutes in Amman closed down with the actual outbreak of war on Jan. 17.



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## Step closer to peace

THE IRAQI ANNOUNCEMENT that it was withdrawing its forces from Kuwait early Tuesday in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 660 is consistent with Baghdad's position which was announced on Feb. 15 and the Soviet peace initiative that followed.

It is indeed painful to adopt and implement such a move in the absence of any guarantees against continued aggression and continued efforts to decimate the country and its leadership. But then there are painful decisions that heads of state and statesmen have to take and carry out in save lives and avert further destruction of the country.

For all one could see and hear, the Iraqi withdrawal could have started much earlier than it was actually announced, and this might perhaps also explain the "surprisingly light" resistance that American military spokesmen said the allied forces encountered in their ground assault and push into Kuwait. And this would also indicate a desire on the part of the Iraqi leadership to save as many lives as possible as indeed everybody is duty-bound to do.

One is reminded of the Iranian acceptance of a ceasefire with Iraq after eight years of war. "A bitter cup of poison" — that was how the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini described the decision in the summer of 1988. Well, one also has to remember that Iraq had no more military or strategic ambitions other than to bring about a ceasefire and put an end to the war then.

Not another drop of blood need be shed in the Gulf today if the objective of the allies is to free Kuwait since the party occupying the emirate is leaving. We hope that there would be a positive response to the Iraqi move from the U.S. and its allies with a different outlook on all that is happening in the Gulf today. This is a moment to look at armies as not just fighting machines of any country or regimes but rather as human beings whose blood need not be spilled to serve a goal like the declared objective of the U.S.-alliance i.e. the liberation of Kuwait. This is what Iraq appeared to be saying in its announcement early today. It is withdrawing from Kuwait anyway; why should any drop of blood be wasted in the meantime?

This is a time to work for peace, not continue the devastating and senseless war. Every effort should be exerted to take advantage of the Iraqi decision to agree on a ceasefire, an end to hostilities and to give peace the chance to prevail once and for all.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE FACT that a minority of people has been organising anti war demonstrations in Western cities does not absolve the majority from the crime they committed by endorsing a decision by their leaders to launch aggression on Iraq, said Al Rai's Arabic daily Monday. The paper noted that parliaments in Britain, the United States and France had unanimously approved a decision to wage war on Iraq and destroy its military might and economic capabilities and to kill its people and public opinion polls in these three countries manifested the true feelings of the French, American and British people as enemies of the Arabs and Islam, noted the paper. Therefore, one can only assume that not only the armed forces of these colonial powers are intent on waging a war of genocide on the Iraqi people, but also the people of these countries who are full of hatred against the Arabs and Muslims, the paper pointed out. Needless to say that George Bush who lied to his own people and the world community, and also deceived the Soviet Union by pretending to accept an Iraqi withdrawal, was determined right from the start to launch this war in order to safeguard Israel's interests and to ensure American domination over oil fields in the Arabian peninsula, the paper said. But the paper added, the minority of the American people can by no means bring down the elected president and his administration which was elected to rule the country, and can only accept the consequences of their leaders' crimes. Therefore, the paper said, the Arab and Muslim people have no alternative but to harbour hatred against the people as well as the leadership of France, the United States and Britain and must wage a holy war against these countries equal in intensity to the criminal actions they are committing against the Iraqi people, taking full revenge on them for the massacre of Iraqi women and children.

A columnist in Al Rai's daily Monday urges the Jordanian people to volunteer for the defence of Iraq and fight alongside the Iraqi troops who are facing the forces of a multitude of nations and offering sacrifice in the name of the Arab World and Islam. Fakhr Kassar says it is not enough to send contributions of medicine and food to Iraq and it is not enough to display sympathy and solidarity with the Iraqi women and children, but each Jordanian citizen should introduce drastic change in his or her style of living in order to really feel the great suffering inflicted on the Iraqi people under the present circumstances. The writer calls on Jordanians to boycott the United States, politically, economically and commercially, and to strike against all American and allied interests in the Arab region. Furthermore, the Arabs should take a joint and collective stand towards the West by stopping oil and gas supplies to Western nations in order to prove that they are indeed backing Iraq by word and deed, the writer continues. He notes that the Iraqi women and children are deprived of the basic materials of life, and they have no water or electricity; and have now reverted to primitive means for transport facing miserable conditions as a result of the barbaric air raids on their cities while the Jordanian people continue to enjoy normal life and suffice themselves with the donations which they offer for the purchase of medicine to the victims of the war. Kassar says that although the Iraqi people are finding means to be self-reliant while continuing to repel aggression, they are also expecting words of sympathy and solidarity to be translated into practice.

# Questions for the Western conscience

By Wijdan Ali

TO start with, I am an apolitical painter and art historian. Yet, since the beginning of the Gulf crisis followed by the Gulf war, a number of facts have revealed themselves that did force me, along with other Western educated men and women to wonder. So far, we thought we knew the West and trusted in the humanitarian values it has been monopolising, which made us believe that justice, equality, freedom, honesty and compassion were discovered on the shores of North America by Christopher Columbus and carried to the four corners of the world by soldiers of the British Empire. However, there are some questions that have troubled most of us and need answers:

What justifies locking up a whole people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza under curfew for six continuous weeks?

Why is it alright for Palestinian and Iraqi children to die because of medicine shortages while international bodies work to save sea birds caught in the oil slick on the shores of the Persian Gulf?

Why should we believe President Bush when he changes his story of the reasons that made him start the Gulf war (1. Defending Saudi Arabia. 2. Liberating Kuwait. 3. Implementing U.N. sanctions. 4. Destroying Saddam Hussein) but should not believe the Iraqi president when, on the third day after the invasion of Kuwait, he said he would accept to withdraw provided there was no foreign intervention?

How can we accept the bombing, by allied forces, of Jordanian civilians (so far over 65 killed — many more than the total of Israelis killed by Saudi missiles — and 55 injured) fleeing the war in buses and small cars or driving oil tankers for a living, on the main Kuwait-Baghdad and Baghdad-Amman highways and condemn the bombing of Israeli targets by Iraqi missiles because some of the victims are civilians?

How come the bombing of the Al Amiriyah shelter in Baghdad, by allied forces where hundreds of children and women were incinerated, and the shelling of the marketplace in Falluja, among other civilian targets, are justified provided they help drive the people of Iraq to overthrow their president?

Why is it when Saddam occupies Kuwait he is called a Hitler and when Bush and his colleagues occupy oilfields in the Gulf they are liberators? When Saddam sends 38 Saudi missiles into Israel he is a terrorist and when the American coalition makes over 90,000 sorties in one month and throws more than 100 thousand tonnes of explosives, mostly over Iraqi and Kuwaiti civilian targets, they are champions of justice?

Why should the Iraqi people listen to President Bush's instigation to rise against their

president instead of the American people following Saddam's advice to change Mr. Bush when more Americans oppose their administration than Iraqis?

Why should the Jordanian leadership and people be punished by imposing sanctions against them, cutting off their oil supply and economic aid, and subjecting them to different kinds of threats and blackmail just for holding on to their beliefs, standing up to injustice (Jordan opposed both the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Anglo, French, American invasion of the Gulf) and opposing the so-called champions of Western democracy and not succumbing to their bribery and intimidation?

How could we believe in the credibility of a new world order when so far \$60 billion has been spent on the Gulf war by the allies alone while 40,000 children die every day because of starvation, malnutrition and disease?

Why for the past 40 years and in spite of all the injustice, torture and humiliation endured by the Palestinians under Israeli rule, has there never been (and never will be) an American human rights committee to investigate their plight while barely two months after the Iraqi invasion a Senate Human Rights Committee convenes to listen to Kuwaitis testifying against Iraq and the hearings are aired on all the national networks?

How come, on the popular level of the Arab masses, the U.S. is the most hated symbol of modern colonialism when it is the only Western power emerging after World War II that had no colonial past in the Middle East?

When will the West overcome its racism and arrogance and begin applying its own standards equally to blacks, Muslims, Arabs, Asians and "others"?

A final question and the only one with an answer: How many wrongs make a right? NONE.

# The Palestinians have the right to choose their representative and they have

By Sana Atiyeh

IT APPEARS as though one of the plans of what has become known as the "new world order," or "post-war security arrangements in the region," is to find different, new representatives for the Palestinian people. The Western-led campaign that has been launched against the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) since the Gulf crisis broke out can only indicate that this is precisely what is being prepared.

Aside from the three-year-old intifada, and for the first time in over 23 years, the world has taken keen interest in finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli, Palestinian-Israeli conflict "after the Gulf crisis is solved," or "after the liberation of Kuwait."

What seems to be cooking in the political back-rooms is to find a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but excluding the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians.

In other words, the Western countries, with the support of the Arab countries now allied with the United States, are working towards implementing Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's plan for autonomy for Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories, and completely ignoring the fact that

Palestinians will not accept anything less than an independent Palestinian state on their soil.

We hear all kinds of voices being raised about how the PLO has been weakened because of its position supporting Iraq. We hear and read how the PLO is divided on the Gulf issue. We hear and read how the PLO is losing its credibility with the Palestinians because it did not take a stronger position with Iraq. We hear how the Palestinians now need news and different representatives.

Recently, the European Community (EC) decided to send aid to Palestinians living under Israeli occupation (while, of course, sending aid to Israel). At the same time, however, the EC has made a point of refusing to meet with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat "because of his statements supporting Iraq." Earlier in the month, the Portuguese foreign minister had said the EC wanted to liquidate relations with the PLO — something, however, that was not clearly confirmed by the EC.

For a while the Syrians have been hinting at being open to recognising the state of Israel and perhaps attempt a Camp

David style peace with the Jewish state. These indications were clear before the Gulf crisis started with former American President Jimmy Carter's visit to Syria last year, during which he stated that Syria was prepared to negotiate with the Israelis. Syria again leaked something of the sort when German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher met with the Syrian president two weeks ago.

The Saudis and the anti-Iraq Arab coalition have been quite frank — and what many Arabs saw as audacious — by refusing repeated Iraqi peace proposals because, "they linked the Kuwaiti issue with other regional issues," as if the Palestinian issue was not an Arab problem.

In fact, Saudi officials were quoted in Newsweek's edition of Jan. 14 as advocating an independent Palestinian state on the East Bank of the Jordan River. Others thought that the Palestinian problem should be solved "with whoever is in Amman."

A Saudi official in Riyadh was quoted as saying: "It would be much simpler to negotiate a readjustment of boundaries on the West Bank between Israel and whoever is

in power in Amman than to negotiate into existence an entirely new country called Palestine."

When the eight foreign ministers of the anti-Iraq Arab coalition met last week in Cairo to discuss post-war security arrangements in the region, they spoke about "post war efforts to settle the Palestinian problem in peace talks with Israel," without a mention of the representatives of the Palestinians, the PLO.

The Washington Post on Feb. 17 reported that their discussions excluded a role for the PLO and quoted an Egyptian official as saying that the "PLO is finished." One of the officials was in fact quoted as saying "that Palestinians (themselves) are finished."

This campaign against the PLO has also received help from most in the Western media. They are talking and writing about how the PLO and Yasser Arafat are some of the "losers" after the war, as if to further advocate this idea.

For example, in the New York Times issue on Feb. 15, and published in the International Herald Tribune, a headline in the editorial page read: "the world will need a new

How come the Western press continues to portray Gulf Arabs as cruel, degenerate, corrupt, stupid, lecherous, ignorant, oil-rich tyrants but accepts their Western patrons as champions of democracy? Is it because the bills are fully paid by petrodollars?

If it is wrong for Iraqi soldiers to kill Kuwaiti youths (and it is wrong) why is it right for Israeli soldiers, only since the beginning of the intifada, to kill 217 Palestinian children below the age of 15, deliberately and accidentally injure 50,000, detain and imprison more than 1,000 and cause over 4,883 Palestinian children under the age of 16 to become homeless due to blowing up their family homes, all without outraging the conscience of Western governments? If anything, Western aid to Israel is multiplying.

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PLO." This headline apparently contradicted the commentary by Rita Hauser, an international lawyer and chairperson in the U.S. of the Tel Aviv-based International Centre for Peace in the Middle East.

What she was actually saying can be summarised in the final conclusion of her column: "Israel's refusal to acknowledge the PLO as the legitimate representative of virtually all Palestinians would foreclose any meaningful dialogue. The Palestinians alone... will select their representative and the PLO remains their choice." The (Gulf) war will not alter that reality."

Now although Ms. Hauser was very specific about the importance of holding dialogue with the PLO to reach a lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli problem, the paper's headline was completely misleading about the contents of her argument.

Whoever the U.S. and allies are thinking of to replace the PLO or Yasser Arafat is simply not going to work for the simple reason that the Palestinians themselves decide who represents them and what sort of peace they want.

Perhaps the West and their Arab allies think that the Palestinians have grown desperate after a three-year-old rebellion against Israeli occupation and that they would accept autonomy after what the Americans, Europeans and others see as the PLO's failure to secure any meaningful dialogue.

This is doubtful. It is a grave mistake to believe that a whole generation of young Palestinians would put their lives on the line every day for three years just to accept local municipal elections and gain peace without any justice. They have been rebelling and will probably continue to do so, to achieve their aspirations for an independent state led by the PLO.

History has shown oppressed people eventually achieve their rights with their struggle. And for over 23 years, the Palestinians have shown great resilience and determination to achieve what they want. As long as they continue to exist, they will also continue to put pressure on the Arab regimes and the whole world until their rights are fully addressed, above all their right to an independent Palestinian state on their, and only their, soil.

# Where eagles dare: Jordan's image is not up for grabs

By Nermeen Murad

WHILE SLOGANS of defiance and anger permeate the public reaction in Jordan since the Gulf crisis started on Aug. 2, many Jordanians reserve important quiet moments for prayers for peace and stability in Jordan as well as in Iraq. Coupled with these prayers is one that slips almost unnoticed, a prayer for understanding from the "others."

Many Western journalists are bombarded with shouts of anger from the public and they are at a loss as to what to do with those obvious emotional outbursts. Translated into words, observers later tell the journalists, these people want them to look back at the causes of instability in the region, put things into perspective. In other words they want them to understand why all of this is happening at this time in this region.

Some of the journalists then immediately lash out: "Well we cannot keep going back to the Crusades everytime we carry a news item on the Middle East." They are right, but not necessarily in the way they think about the problem.

People here want them to explain why one million Asian refugees receive tents and pieces of bread from the world of peace when they are fleeing war-torn areas; yet 4,000 Westerners receive world acclaim and sympathy, when they are held hostage and when they are released. All people are equal but some are more equal than others?

The lady journalist who had trouble going back to the Crusades to explain the Middle East found ample time to dig out a story on how President Saddam Hussein gave presents to journalists and writers twisting words and sentiments to show the world, the civilised world, that gifts are not given without a price. In this world they are.

Some witnesses said they believed the death toll could be far higher than 12. One reporter said

If she dedicated two or three paragraphs talking about the root of this gift syndrome in the Middle East, she would not have gone back to the Crusades but would have realised that those receiving gifts received them after they showed their continuous support for Iraq (without expecting payment of course) during eight years of war and then received a gift in appreciation of their concern after the war ended, in Jordan at least. These gifts were not to change their opinions, nor to direct them to a particular path but to say "thank you" after it was all done. Nobody promised them anything before. Bribery is when you pay someone to do something after the conclusion of the deal.

In the dictionary the word bribe means: to promise, offer, or give something, especially money, to procure services. Bribe is not to say "thank you."

Going back to the roots means not having a "respectful and democratic" newspaper carry an editorial with a headline that says "Sbut up king" when referring to the respected leader of one of the states in this nation and then have the reporter run around feeling comfortable to ask and comment about the sentiments of a people who want peace and have been told to shut up. Can people please be excused for feeling a bit angry about this Western command to the Middle East?

We wonder if the Western media would ever be able to free itself from using the following statement: "Jordan's people, the majority of whom are Palestinians, support Saddam?" The message in that statement, which is often carried by Western news agencies, effectively translates into: "Jordan is Palestine and Palestinians shoved

the Jordanian minority to the side and supported Saddam's invasion of Kuwait." What should be said, we think, is "Jordan, to which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were kicked out after Israel took over their homeland in two stages, in 1948 and 1967, and has been harassing what is left of them with clubs, guns and tear gas, supports the Iraqi president's insistence on linkage to erase the double standards in dealing with this region." It may well be a long sentence to use in reports and dispatches, but I am sure professional journalists can compress it into something that comes close to that piece of truth instead of using that wrong old theme of theirs. Incidentally, let us not forget that many of the Palestinians in Jordan are "refugees" who do not vote.

The world felt sympathy for Israeli children wearing masks to protect themselves from the "evil one" who dared to threaten the use of chemical weapons because it was brought to the world in colour through news media channels. However, a man who in Jordan cried his eyes out over the loss of his wife and five children in a bomb shelter in Baghdad was portrayed in Western media reports as "A man who SAYS he lost his family in an attack that Iraq CLAIMED was aimed at a civilian shelter." Give us a break, journalists. How do you want us not to be angry over these double standards?

Another one: "Saudi Arabia's king is a benevolent leader who keeps in touch with his subjects." Subjects is right. Subjects for discussion, subject to oppression and subjects for earlier articles by the West on lack of democracy in the Middle East.

What changed all that? But if you want to hear

more, listen to this. "Kuwait was one of the first democracies in the region." A democracy similar to the other "only democracy in the Middle East" namely Israel. One allowed only 200,000 people to vote, delegating the rest of the population to Kuwaitis "without nationalities," while the second one keeps a million and a half Palestinians hostage while allowing a religion-inspired invading population to dictate what form of oppression to use against the "occupied territories." Or is it a democracy because it was the will of the occupying majority to use oppressive methods against the occupied minority and allowed both sides to write about it in newspapers?

Jordan, on the other hand, is swamped with "fundamentalists, extremists, radicals," that is if we get really lucky.

The King of Jordan had always been a "moderate" to the West, but after he introduced democracy to his Kingdom he has become a "radical" who "walks a tight rope" not because the Western world is upset with him but because of "internal instability" and therefore the ever understanding Mr. Bush was quick to explain "the pressures" on the Kingdom.

The root causes of problems in this land, if anyone wants to look for them are not found in the times of the Crusades. Many of them date back only to the day Jordan allowed news hungry reporters to come in and base themselves here to write their opinions or their impressions of what this country should be feeling because it supports Iraq and has the courage to say that the West is wrong.

The writer is on the staff of the Jordan Times.

## Al Khobar

(Continued from page 1)

rious wounds were rushed into operating theatres."

Iraq said it had launched a missile strike at a military base in Dhahran.

A military spokesman quoted by Baghdad Radio, said: "With God's help, a destruc-

tive strike with Al Hussein missiles was directed at Dhahran base, a launching pad for aggression on our land and people."

The attack was the first reported deadliest delivered by Iraq since the United States and its allies launched the Gulf war on Jan. 17.

Some witnesses said they believed the death toll could be far higher than 12. One reporter said

the initial death toll was "very conservative."

Earlier Monday Iraq said it had fired two missiles at Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor site. Israel said the rocket landed in "open areas" in the desert in the south, where the reactor is sited. It did not disclose details.

An Iraqi military spokesman said a "destructive blow with

Hijarah Al Sijil (shale stone) missiles was directed at the Zionist entity, specifically at the Dimona area, the site of the Zionist nuclear reactor used for military purposes."

He said it was followed by "another destructive blow with Al Sijil missiles at the Dimona reactors in the Naqab Desert."

Israel gave casualties in previous Iraqi missile attacks as four

dead and more than 300 wounded.

No precise official count of casualties in the Al Khobar attack was immediately available.

"All we know is an indeterminate number of U.S. service personnel have been killed or wounded," the army spokesman said.

An American television cameraman who arrived quickly at

the scene said witnesses told him scores of bodies had been pulled from the wreckage.

Another said he saw stretchers with uncovered bodies on them being loaded onto a bus filled with people on stretchers. He saw the bodies had been burned.

The U.S. army spokesman said he did not know if Patriot anti-missile missiles had been fired to intercept the rocket.



## Coalition

(Continued from page 1)

in his first public statement on the ground war's progress.

There were warnings that Iraqi troops could still inflict damage and that the Republican Guards in southern Iraq, believed to be Iraq's most potent fighting force, had barely been encountered.

National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft called for caution.

"My fears are that there's too much optimism. The operations are going well. But he still does have a very formidable army and I think we need to be cautious about euphoria," Mr. Scowcroft said in a TV interview.

Confident the U.S. and allied power was succeeding, Mr. Bush had no diplomatic communication with the Soviets, who failed in efforts to broker a peaceful Iraqi withdrawal. Mr. Bush had no response to Soviet disappointment over the allied invasion.

Before launching the ground offensive, Mr. Bush spoke with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev by telephone over Soviet proposals to avert the escalation.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Monday discussions with Iraq after the Gulf war were more likely to be fruitful if Saddam Hussein was not in power.

"As one of my colleagues said 'it would be very much easier if he wasn't there,'" he told the parliamentary foreign affairs committee.

Mr. Hurd said allied military action once Iraqi troops had been driven from Kuwait would depend on the situation on the ground.

"Exactly how the allies will proceed depends on what they find then," he said. "This included the status of the government in Baghdad and whether it was still 'menacing'."

A senior government official said a meeting of Prime Minister John Major's war cabinet was told by Sir David Craig, the chief of defence staff, to guard against excessive optimism over initial successes in the land war. Significant forces had still to be engaged, he said.

"We are progressing as planned, if not a little better. But these are very much early days," the official said.

From his exile in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait's Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah said Sunday he was praying for a quick victory of the allied forces over Iraq and thanked the countries involved in the war.

The emir's message on national day, marking 30 years of Kuwaiti independence, also was his first reaction to the ground war.

Syria and Britain, their troops fighting Iraq in the Gulf war, exchanged ambassadors Monday to formally heal a four-year rift.

Officials said Andrew Green, Britain's new envoy to Damascus, had talks on the war with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaf after presenting his diplomatic credentials.

Diplomats said Britain had endorsed Mohammad Khader, head of the foreign ministry's West European department in Damascus, as Syria's ambassador to London.

Syrian newspapers blamed Iraq for the ground offensive.

The Syrian media, however, made no mention of the 19,000 Syrian troops that are part of the multinational force.

Nor was there any official reaction from the Syrian government on the ground assault.

## LETTERS

### Formerly American

To the Editor:

I am a former American citizen, presently a stateless person, having renounced my American nationality on Nov. 6, 1984. Since I am no longer an American citizen — or a citizen of any other country — may I express my personal view that if the Americans are stupid to start a war, then I hope they get killed?

I wish to express my admiration for your king and for his courage in attacking the Americans in his recent speech.

Of course, the Americans have reacted like the spoilt children they are by cutting off all your money!

Nevertheless, it is not correct to say that the present war against Iraq is a war against all Arabs and against Islam; it is a war against any and all people everywhere standing in the way of Israeli domination of the Middle East and Jewish domination of American and European political life.

Iraq's actions have been illegal, but so are the actions of America, Britain, Israel and most other countries. The war is a pretext to destroy an enemy of Israel.

This is made possible by two lies: a religious lie, that Jews are "God's chosen people;" and a historical lie, that Hitler gassed "six million Jews."

Carlos W. Porter  
Niveze-Bas, 112,  
4845 SART-LEZ-SPA,  
Belgium.

### Bravo

To the Editor:

We have the privilege, of hearing that the war was going well. Bravo Mr. Bush, with these fatal words, you show yourself to be the star pupil of Mr. Hitler's school of atrocity and genocide, take a gold star, move to the front of the class.

If you desire to harvest right and fruitful peace then, that, you must plan. But, though your mouth mouthed these words, you planted the storm of fire and flying steel, so what dread harvest can you expect?

Your people you keep in the dark, feed a diet of ministry of propaganda twaddle. The constitution you violate twist, and make nonsense of.

We cry loud to history, you have blighted the tomorrow of children through all the stations of the breath.

With a great voice we lay a curse on your ilk, may you never be blessed by death, may you live for ever and ever with the memory of your crime.

This message is not only for you, Mr. Bush but also for Mr. Genscher, Mr. Hurd, and all the other members of the pack, who have brought the horrible spasm of peace to Baghdad.

Babadginga,  
Ambassador de la Paix,  
Villeneuve  
Occitanie,  
France

### No more the land of free

To the Editor:

I AM writing this because I want to convey my assurance to you that no matter what you may hear from the U.S. media and U.S. government, there are in fact many Americans here who detest the imperialist aggression of the United States on Iraq.

We are almost never allowed a voice by the United States media, although these media are supposed to be free. We cannot understand the general lack of concern in the media and in the U.S. government for Iraqi suffering.

We feel most wretched to watch our government commit these crimes despite our loud protests and letters. I am afraid that our letters receive scant attention and perfunctory responses from our congressmen. More unforgivably, our protests and demonstrations are ignored by the mainstream media, or news of these demonstrations are placed on a back page, in a small brief article.

Most importantly of all, perhaps, our views are never aired in public. Our opinions and reasons for these opinions are never allowed to appear in any media interview or forum. Thus the public here receives only the U.S. government's line, in one form or another.

When they hear of our protests, they cannot understand, sometimes, why we are protesting, because our cause never receives any attention. We try to make ourselves heard, but it is almost impossible.

I am writing to you, therefore, almost in desperation. I am turning to another country to be heard because my own country, sadly, is no longer a free one.

Marianne Bosomworth,  
5316 S. Cornell Ave.,  
Apt. 2W,  
Chicago, IL 60615,  
U.S.A.

### Someone cares

To the Editor:

I'm writing this letter to you, I suppose, because I saw the Jordan Times' editor on a television segment of how the Palestinians hate the Westerners which I can't say as I blame them for, and also I guess its my own personal protest of this war which should never have taken place.

I'm very angry at what is being done to the people of Iraq, and to the country itself. My heart goes out to these people and what they must be going through being bombed day after day. It is disgusting. I can't even begin to fully comprehend what it is like for them but I do care. It also sickens me to hear of the Palestinians in the occupied territories being kept virtual prisoners in their own homes by the curfew.

I'm not going to pretend I'm very knowledgeable in this area but I do know these are not new problems, surely something could have been done before it came to this. It bothers me that the Middle East may never be the same. Everyone seems to want a piece of it.

I've never voiced my opinion on anything such as this before but I feel so strongly about it I just couldn't stand it any longer. I'm horrified by the bombings and by some of the comments I've heard made by some of the allied troops.

I may sound crazy but I just had to reach out somehow to some one to let them know I do care but at the same time feel so helpless.

I also admire and respect the people of Iraq because even after all they've been through they still seem to show determination and haven't given up hope. I'm also glad the people of Jordan are sticking by them.

Marnet,  
295 Germain Street,  
Saint John,  
N.B.  
Canada. E 2h 2H1

(A British born Westerner who wishes the people of Iraq and Jordan luck, love, health and peace)

### Blood is thicker

To the Editor:

Watching Rami Khouri's "Encounter" of Feb. 20 helped me realise two very important aspects of the war that is being relentlessly pursued against Iraq and the Arab Nation by Big Brother George Bush.

Mr. Khouri described the anti-Iraq alliance as the chequebook coalition. He went on to outline how the West looked upon the Arabs as expendable. Third World people who are lagging so far behind the "civilised" world that they are only good as cannon fodder, in other words in a classical colonial outlook.

Until yesterday's Encounter, I assumed that the U.S.-led alliance applied the simple rule "if you are not with us, then you are against us." Since the beginning of the crisis, I have tried in vain to understand why the USA and many of its allies have taken such a hostile attitude towards Jordan. On the face of things, Jordan could not be blamed by the "civilised" world for standing behind principles it upheld for decades. It cannot be punished the way it has been for calling for peaceful negotiations to end this conflict rather than resort to bloodshed and destruction.

It suddenly dawned on me!

I can see clearly now why the alliance, particularly the USA and the U.K., have adopted this position vis-a-vis Jordan. This small country had the courage to say no to the mighty (or not so mighty) dollar. It has actually refused to be bought and stuck to its principles. Simply, Jordan has not behaved the way a Third World country is expected to behave, in the eyes of Bush and his desert riders. Why, they ask themselves, did Jordan not behave the way some of its neighbours did. Look at Egypt (have you heard the joke about Mubarak's trousers?). Syria and Turkey. In fact, Jordan did not even behave like many First World countries.

Russia's acquiescence at the United Nations was bought by food and economic aid from Europe and generous handouts from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. China's apologetic abstention in the same August body was rewarded by the "civilised" world by forgetting about the Tiananmen Square events.

Many in this world say that Jordan is committing suicide. I direct them respectfully to the speeches and press conferences of His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan since this crisis erupted. They made it crystal clear that Jordan is not ready to sell out its conscience, that promising more aid or threatening to cut off badly needed aid already committed will not force Jordan to waiver from its principles.

To use Jim Baker's favourite word, the alliance has grossly "miscalculated." Blanket judgments are almost always wrong. The carrot that led Egypt and other like-minded Arab countries down the path of servitude did not work in the case of Jordan.

To coin a phrase with licence, Blood runs thicker than the dollar!

Claire de la Plume

# Thou shalt not kill who?

By John Hartung

MANY Christians and Jews believe that the their god's commandment "Thou shalt not kill" means "Thou shalt not kill thy fellow human being." But reading the commandments in their original context suggests that they were meant as moral codes for behaviour between co-religionists. That is, "Thou shalt not kill" meant "Thou shalt not kill thy fellow believer."

More specifically, for the ancient Jews this commandment meant "Thou shalt not kill thy fellow Israelite." This is so much the case that the Talmud takes pains to explain that an Israelite is not liable for killing a fellow Israelite if his intent was to kill a non-believer.

Indeed, even "If an ox while aiming at a heathen killed an Israelite, there is no liability." But "Whosoever destroys a single soul of Israel, scripture imputes guilt to him as though he had destroyed a complete world."

This was obvious to Maimonides, perhaps the most comprehensively knowledgeable student of the Torah and Talmud ever, when he wrote about laws pertaining to the murder of a resident alien: "If an Israelite kills a resident alien, he does not suffer capital punishment... Needless to say, one is not put to death if he kills a heathen... (but) if a resident alien slays an Israelite inadvertently, he must be put to death in spite of his inadvertence."

In fact, according to both the Talmud and the Torah, heathens should be killed for many gratuitous reasons. For example, "A heathen who studies the Torah deserves death, for it is written, Moses commanded us a law for an inheritance, it is our inheritance not theirs" (italics not added).

By extension, in the context of mass murder, there can be no doubt that the god of Judeo-Christianity ordered his followers to commit genocide: "In the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded... And you shall destroy all the peoples that the Lord your God will give over to you, your eyes shall not pity them... They should be utterly destroyed, and should receive no mercy but be exterminated, as the Lord commanded Moses... You will make them as a blazing oven when you appear... You will destroy their offspring from the earth, and their children from among the sons of men."

And there can be no doubt that, according to their own account, the Israelites left Egypt with a standing army of

602,550 men — "every man able to go forth to war" — and dealt with the original Palestinians just as their god had commanded: "Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded."

This same god had explicit plans for Iraq (then called Babylon): "I am stirring up and bringing against Babylon a company of great nations, from the north country, and they shall array themselves against her, from there she shall be taken... Behold, a people comes from the north, a mighty nation and many kings are stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. They lay hold of bow and spear, they are cruel, and have no mercy. The sound of them is like the roaring of the sea, they ride upon horses, arrayed as a man for battle against you, O daughter of Babylon... Who ever is found will be thrust through, and whoever is caught will fall by the sword. Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes, their houses will be plundered and their wife ravished... bows will slaughter the young men, they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb, their eyes will not pity children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendour and pride of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. It will never be inhabited or dwell in for all generations, no Arab will pitch his tent there... The Lord will have compassion on Jacob and will set them in their own land, and aliens will join them and will cleave to the house of Jacob. And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the Lord's land as male and female slaves." But link-

ages between Iraq, Israel and the Palestinians even predates The Oracle of Babylon — it is as ancient as Abraham, the father of Judaism, who was a Chaldean that came to Palestine from Iraq.

"Christianity can be seen as a form of reformed Judaism — one that extends the moral code of the Torah to any proselyte who will worship Jesus — but Christians should not congratulate themselves on their attitude toward those who do not believe in their god.

For those who believe in the god of the Torah, the persecution of the Palestinians and the destruction of Iraq must appear as the fulfillment of ancient prophecies. For those who believe in the God of Islam, the destruction of Iraq and the plight of the Palestinians is a challenge from the forces of evil. In Thomas Paine's view, "if everyone is left to judge his own religion, there is no such thing as a religion that is right... Paine also held that "all national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish (Muslim), appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolise power and profit."

It seems that there are three reasonable theistic possibilities: either the god of Judeo-Christianity is God and the Israelis and Palestinians are getting their due, or the god of Islam is God and Jews and Christians will lose in the end, or Paine was right and God is greatly grieved by the behaviour of both warring parties — especially because each one justifies its killing in the name of a false god.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE







## ANC backpedals on nationalisation

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), in a stark shift in economic thinking, has said nationalisation of key South African industries posed big risks, including a flight of investors and skills.

"We need to look more carefully at the economic reality and begin to find a more overall policy that will begin to solve our problems," it said in an economic policy paper.

The paper is being distributed for discussion among members of the movement, which hopes to form South Africa's first black majority government.

Barely a year ago, on his release from 27 years in jail, Mandela shook foreign and local investors by reaffirming that nationalisation of mines and other leading industries remained a fundamental ANC policy, enshrined in its 1955 freedom charter.

The ANC has since toned down its rhetoric on the issue, but has said nationalisation remained an option in order to redistribute wealth in a mixed economy.

Its latest policy paper says nationalisation could be used to advantage, for instance, if applied to basic services such as electricity. This would ensure supplies to all people that could not be guaranteed by a private company.

"At the moment, large banks and insurance companies invest in profit-making ventures which do not necessarily benefit the people. The argument could be used to suggest a case for nationalising the banks," it added.

It could also be used to dilute what the ANC portrayed as an excessive concentration of economic power in a few white hands. It referred to Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Ltd,

the country's biggest conglomerate, industrial group Barlow Rand Ltd, the financial and diversified industrial house Renbrandt Group Ltd and the powerful Sanlam Investment Institution which has significant mining and business interests.

Arguing that these four groups controlled 51 per cent of shares listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, it said: "By nationalising parts of these conglomerates we could reduce their control over the economy."

But it said nationalisation would be costly, and convincing proof would be needed that it promised more benefits than drawbacks.

Nationalisation could lead to a fall in foreign investment and to the loss of skilled personnel, it said, adding that in other countries it had resulted in inefficient management of enterprises and the economy as a whole.

The government would need to borrow large sums to buy out companies it wished to nationalise, without creating a single new job, while running the risk of not being able to make enough profit to repay the loans and interest.

It would cost, for example, 70 billion rand (\$27.5 billion) to nationalise the country's gold and other mines.

"Even if we borrowed this money, it would put us into serious debt problems for many years to come," it said.

It added it was possible to use other means to achieve the same goals as nationalisation. These included high taxation on mining and taking control of mineral rights in order to be able to lease them out to the private sector.

"These alternative methods could allow us to meet some of the goals of nationalisation without all the possible dangers that nationalisation carries," it concluded.

## Oil prices drift down

LONDON (R) — Oil prices drifted lower in Europe Monday in what dealers described as subdued trading unaffected by the allied land offensive in the Gulf war.

"The market has shown that, if it has to decide whether a ground war makes big difference, the decision is no," an oil analyst at a London-based brokerage house said.

The war psychology has been pushed out to the fringes. People are focusing on supply and demand fundamentals, a trader with a British refiner said.

The April futures contract for North Sea Brent crude oil, an international benchmark, traded in early afternoon on the International Petroleum Exchange in London at \$16.30 a barrel, down 32 cents from Friday's close.

A seasonal fall in demand with the approach of the northern hemisphere spring and high worldwide production have created the prospect of oversupply.

Oil prices have recently come under pressure, falling last Tuesday to a seven-month low of \$16 a barrel.

But one broker said more rapid price falls were unlikely.

"The trend is still of a slightly defensive market. I think there is support at these relatively low levels," he said.

Fears of damage to Saudi Arabian oil facilities have receded since the beginning of the war. But one analyst said: "Princes would be lower, except that Iraq could still have some punch."

Speculation has begun about what the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will do after the war.

"Let's face it, the only thing that matters now is whether OPEC continues to keep the taps open to get back its money (spent on financing the war) or to keep things ticking over," a broker said.

Five OPEC oil ministers were meeting informally in Vienna Monday to discuss how to stop divisions in the Arab World over the Gulf from spilling over into their organisation.

An official OPEC monitoring committee meeting is planned for March 11.

"The market will be looking to that meeting to see what OPEC will be doing about production and quotas and to get some firm direction," a London-based analyst said.

## Indonesia's Muslims to set up Islamic bank

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia is setting up an interest-free Islamic bank to get round a Muslim taboo on usury.

"Many ulama (preachers) believe banking is usury, and usury is forbidden by Islam," said Ali Yafie of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), which will open the bank this year.

Yafie said the government was backing the bank because poor rural Muslims felt they were unable to borrow money needed to set up businesses.

"Some Muslims stay out of banks because they have no money, but most stay out because they think it's taboo. There is no reason they should be deprived of the chance to borrow money."

The MUI believes the bank could attract up to 200 billion rupiah (\$105 million), mostly in small deposits.

In principle the bank, whose seed capital will come from some of the richest of Indonesia's 160 million Muslims will be open to all.

"But in practice we plan to emphasise the weak groups," Yafie said, using the common shorthand that distinguishes poor rural Muslims from the urban rich of Chinese descent who control 80 per cent of the private sector.

How does a bank survive without charging interest? By lending money for specific projects and taking a pre-arranged cut of the profits.

The system forces the bank to choose viable projects. "It means we have to screen and control projects very carefully, be involved at every level," Yafie said.

The MUI plans to take its bank to village level as soon as possible.

"It works elsewhere and we think we can make it work here," Yafie said, pointing to successful Islamic banks in Jordan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

## Australian wool prices plunge in first day of free trade

CANBERRA (R) — Wool prices slid 35 per cent Monday in the first Australian free-market wool auctions for 17 years, Japanese buyers stayed away and confusion reigned.

Japanese, who buy some 20 per cent of Australia's wool, made few bids at the sales, the first since parliament last Friday scrapped a scheme which fixed the minimum wool price at 700 cents (540 U.S. cents) a kilogram because of low demand.

The Japanese, angry that Australia had abandoned the fixed price scheme, want compensation. Australia has rejected the demand.

"I don't need any lectures from the Japanese in terms of how to set prices," Prime Minister Bob Hawke said last week.

The Japanese response at Monday's two sales was to buy only nine per cent of wool offered in Sydney and two per cent in Melbourne, brokers told Reuters.

"The Japanese are staying away. Whether they are waiting to see where the price settles or trying to manipulate the market is difficult to say," Jim Lillie, vice president of the Australian Council of Wool Exporters, told Reuters.

In Monday's free market, the average price of wool fell to 454 cents (360 U.S. cents), some 35 per cent down, in trading brokers and growers described as hesitant and erratic.

But brokers stressed that the first day gave no indication of where the price might settle because, in the absence of the Japanese, growers withdrew some 35 per cent of the wool offered when it failed to reach the reserves they had set.

Under the old fixed price scheme, the grower's Australian Wool Corp (AWC), bought wool unsold below 700 cents, amassing a stockpile of 4.8 million bales and debt of 2.8 billion dollars (\$2.1 billion).

Growers who withdrew their wool Monday will have to reoffer it for sale at a later date in the free market.

Western Europeans were the main buyers at the two auctions of 26,414 bales the first since sales were suspended on Feb. 4 pending parliament's decision.

## Lengthy Gulf war may accelerate slowdown of Japanese economy

TOKYO (R) — Whether or not the Gulf war ends quickly, Japan's economy is slowing down.

Economists agree on that basic point, but differ over how sharp the downturn is likely to be and how much worse a lengthy Gulf conflict would make it.

Japanese economists say slow-growth in personal consumption and capital spending by companies are likely to dampen economic growth to around 3.5 per cent of GNP (gross national product) in the business year starting April 1 compared to an expected rise of 5.2 per cent in 1990/91.

If the war ends soon, that outlook is unlikely to change much, they say.

"If the war ends quickly, there won't be much impact on the Japanese economy," said Toshiaki Kakimoto, chief economist at Sumitomo Bank.

"If the war is short, oil prices will fall again, removing one cause of inflation and the Bank of Japan (BOJ) will be able to lower interest rates," Kakimoto said.

A quick victory for the U.S.-led allied forces in the Gulf might improve corporate sentiment towards capital investment, Japanese economists said.

"Right now business is cautious, but if the war ends in a couple of months, they will get back to normal," Kakimoto said.

A speedy end to the war might actually give Japan's economy a bit of a boost, some Japanese economists said.

"If the war is short... we can expect cheaper oil prices with a good impact on the economy and inflation," said Masaru Takagi, economist at Fuji Research Institute.

Foreign economists worry

tute Corp. "After that, the Japanese economy will keep its momentum to expand more."

Japan imports nearly all of its oil, and some 70 per cent of those purchases are made in the Middle East.

Japanese economists acknowledged that a lengthy conflict would certainly dampen economic growth if it sparked a rise in oil prices and could make the slowdown more pronounced even if crude prices are stable.

"At present, the outlook for companies and consumers is cloudy, and if the war drags on that would be a minus for the economy," said Nobuyuki Ueda, a senior economist at the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan.

Any blow to the U.S. economy as a result of a long war would also translate into bad news for Japan's export-dependent economy, as would the need to provide more money to fund the multi-national forces in the Gulf.

Japan donated \$4 billion last November in its first package of aid for the Gulf and has pledged an additional \$9 billion. To win opposition support for the added funding, the government agreed to cut defence spending over the next four years and to raise taxes on petroleum and corporations.

But foreign economists are much more bearish on Japan's economy, whatever happens in the Gulf.

"Even if the war is over tomorrow, I think this economy is still going to slow substantially," said Russell Jones, economist at UBS Phillips and Drew International.

"The fact is, this economy is slowing far more rapidly than officials are willing to admit," Foreign economists worry

pointed out.

## Turkey and Iran seek increased commercial, industrial cooperation

ANKARA (R) — Turkey and Iran said Monday they were seeking increased commercial, industrial cooperation and joint projects in petrochemicals and natural gas.

"We want intensified cooperation in petrochemicals, other industries, technology and natural gas," said Turkish State Minister Mehmet Koceler, co-chairman of a joint economic commission meeting in Ankara, the state-run radio reported.

The commission, working on a technical level since last Wednesday, met Monday under Koceler.

er and Iranian Heavy Industry Minister Mohammad Hadi Nejad-Hosseini.

"A natural gas pipeline from Iran (via Turkey) to Europe will bring large construction projects to our countries. Along with this we want to establish joint marketing projects with Iran," Koceler said.

The pipeline project has been under discussion between Iran and Turkey since 1987.

Nejad-Hosseini said they wanted increased technical and industrial cooperation and a

much larger trade volume between Iran and Turkey.

Turkey's two-way trade volume with Iran stood at \$848 million in January-October 1990 and Koceler said they were aiming for a figure of between \$2 and \$2.5 billion a year.

"This meeting taking place at a time when the Gulf war is continuing at full force shows how strong are the foundations of Turkish-Iranian relations," Nejad-Hosseini said.

A protocol is expected to be signed when the meeting ends Tuesday.

## French economy shrinks in fourth quarter of 1990

PARIS (R) — French quarterly economic growth shrank at the end of last year for the first time in nearly four years, the government said Monday.

Output of goods and services fell 0.4 per cent between October and December as businesses cut back after brisk third-quarter growth of 1.3 per cent.

The last time the economy shrank was in the first quarter of 1987. If output fell further in the current quarter as the effects of the Gulf crisis bite harder, France would be in recession — widely defined by economists as two consecutive quarters of negative growth — for the first time in 10 years.

The National Statistics Office, which released the report, did not comment on the reasons for the contraction, but its figures show

investment fell sharply and firms preferred to fill orders by running down stocks rather than cranking up output.

For the whole of 1990, economic growth reached 2.8 per cent, down from four per cent in 1989 and 4.3 per cent in 1988.

The government, which had correctly forecast the 2.8 per cent figure in the budget it presented in September, is braced for a further slowdown this year to two per cent.

But a number of private economists fear this may be too optimistic.

"If things stay as they are, with the same level of activity as over the last few weeks, two per cent is too high a figure," said Michel Develle, chief economist at Banque Paribas. "Growth could be of the order of one or 1.5 per cent."

But if consumers feel confident enough to spend more strongly for a month or two after the war ends growth could pick up to, say, 1.5 per cent to two per cent, Develle added.

Even without the war, France faces problems, economists said.

Two of its main export markets — the United States and Britain — are in recession and the low dollar is hurting sales in third markets of goods priced in dollars, such as aircraft.

Furthermore, investment and spending are being dampened by interest rates that must be kept high to match those in Germany.

Bernard Godefont of Nomura Securities in Paris is looking for growth of less than 1.5 per cent this year, despite a recovery that he expects to start as early as the spring.

## Chinese official stresses need to control rising foreign debt

BEIJING (R) — The new head of China's foreign exchange control administration said foreign debt was growing rapidly and stricter controls on borrowing were needed, the official China Daily reported Monday.

The newspaper quoted Yin Jieyan as telling a conference held by the administration Sunday that foreign debt had grown rapidly in the second half of 1990 and particularly in the last quarter. He did not give figures.

Last year many Western governments and international organisations resumed loan programmes that had been frozen after China's government used the army to smash pro-democracy protests in June 1989.

Western diplomats said it was difficult to estimate the size of China's foreign debt as the gov-

ernment was not forthcoming with data.

It could be as high as \$50 billion, one diplomat said, up from about \$45 billion in June last year and \$41.2 billion at the end of the 1989.

Debt was about \$40 billion at the end of 1988, the diplomat said.

Yin said foreign debt repayment accounted for less than 10 per cent of China's total foreign exchange earnings last year.

Hard currency earnings in 1990 rose 10.7 per cent to \$45.1 billion, while foreign exchange spending rose 2.6 per cent to \$39.5 billion, the newspaper said.

The newspaper quoted Yin as saying "that stricter controls should be put on the approval of foreign commercial loans and the

granting of loans to non-manufacturing projects or projects unable to pay back the money."

He did not give specifics, other than to suggest that regions and enterprises within China should exchange hard currency resources instead of relying on loans from abroad.

The diplomat said that since China's exports were booming — rising 18.1 per cent in 1990 to more than \$62 billion — the debt situation seemed quite good.

The official Economic Daily said Monday that total foreign debt was less than 90 per cent of money earned from exports and Chinese working overseas.

"They should release (debt) figures because actually it should be very good news," the diplomat commented.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES				
Monday, February 25, 1991 Central Bank official rates				
U.S. dollar	Buy	Sell	Japanese yen (for 100)	\$64.0 \$67.0
Pound Sterling	1291.4	1299.1	Dutch guilder	399.1 393.4
Deutsche mark	441.0	443.6	Swedish crown	118.5 119.2
Swiss franc	514.5	517.6	Italian lira (for 100)	38.5 39.3
French franc	129.6	130.4	Belgian franc (for 10)	216.4 217.7

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES				
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.				
One Sterling	1.9355/65	U.S. dollar		
One U.S. dollar	1.530/40	Canadian dollar		
	1.5125/32	Deutsche mark		
	1.7048/58	Dutch guilder		
	1.2947/54	Swiss franc		
	31.10/15	Belgian franc		
	5.135/40	French franc		
	1131/1132	Italian lire		
	132.35/45	Japanese yen		
	5.6200/50	Swedish crown		
	5.9100/50	Norwegian crowns		
	5.6140/90	Danish crowns		
One ounce of gold	357.50/358.00	U.S. dollars		

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Performances: 12:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15



# Warsaw Pact states disband military side of alliance

BUDAPEST (R) — The six countries of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact Monday disbanded their military alliance which divided Europe and locked its Eastern half under communism for almost half a century of cold war.

At an historic meeting of defence and foreign ministers in Budapest, the six nations signed accords scrapping the Pact's military structures but leaving its political component intact until the alliance's formal burial in the year ahead.

The meeting sealed an agreement nullifying several military accords and putting an end to Warsaw Pact military activity from March 31, when its military organisation would cease to exist, said Istvan Kormendi, head of Hungary's team of experts at the session.

Meanwhile an official in Moscow said a meeting in Budapest to wind up the Soviet-led trading bloc Comecon, set for Wednesday, was likely to be postponed.

to give the Kremlin more preparation time.

Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier told reporters it was not certain Comecon would delay the session.

Hungary's Kormendi, speaking to Reuters about the agreement to end Warsaw Pact military activity, said the text would not be published. A Hungarian source indicated that this was at Moscow's request.

No final new security arrangement for the region has yet been worked out. As Soviet troops continue their withdrawal from Eastern Europe, there are fears of security void and instability in all these countries.

The Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria are all members of the Pact, created in 1955 as a counterpart to the Western NATO alliance. East Germany's membership ceased when it merged into a united Germany last October, and Albania pulled out in 1968.

Kormendi said the six agreed to set up a group to prepare another meeting of the Pact's Political Consultative Committee in Prague in early July which would probably discuss winding up the alliance's political component.

Following the collapse of communism and Soviet power in Eastern Europe over a year ago, the Pact's dissolution was a foregone conclusion but Moscow's concerns about future security arrangements kept it alive on paper.

A year after Hungary proposed abolition of the alliance, which had a total of 4.8 million men in arms, 3.7 million of them Soviet, Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev agreed on Feb. 12 to scrap the military element by April 1.

One delegate said the gathering of demobilised military chiefs and smiling foreign ministers in Budapest, where Pact troops stormed in 35 years ago to crush

## Soviets to enforce March 17 referendum

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet parliament ordered rebel republics Monday to abandon their boycott of a nationwide referendum on the future of the Soviet Union.

Seven out of 15 Soviet republics, including the three breakaway Baltic governments, have decided not to take part in the March 17 referendum intended by President Mikhail Gorbachev to endorse his plans for a reform federation.

Deputies voted overwhelmingly for a resolution ordering republican governments to carry out the vote. The move appeared to clash with Gorbachev's original declaration that each union republic should decide "freely" on the issue.

"Depriving people of the right to take part in the union referendum is a violation of the rights of USSR citizens," Vladimir Orlov, head of the referendum commission, said.

Clearly anticipating an outright refusal from some if not all the republics, it provided for district administrations and major factories to organise voting independently.

The provision appeared designed to rally support from largely Russian-speaking areas of the Baltic republics as well as large industrial enterprises with mainly Russian work forces. It said workers' families should also be allowed to vote at the factories.

The Baltics — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — have all opted for their own "opinion polls" and spurned the Gorbachev referendum. Lithuania's poll was carried out early this month, producing an overwhelming majority for independence. Similar votes are planned for Saturday in Latvia and Estonia.

The Baltic states insisted on the poll formula since they were annexed by Moscow in 1940, have never been legally part of the Soviet Union, and therefore should not take part in the referendum.

The Soviet parliament repeated Gorbachev's argument that the Baltic "opinion polls" were

## North Korea wants ties with Japan by year's end

TOKYO (AP) — A North Korean official visiting Tokyo said his country hopes to establish diplomatic ties with Japan by the year's end, organisers of his visit said Monday.

Kim Yong Sun, a senior member of North Korea's ruling Workers' (Communist) Party, made the remarks at a news conference open only to Japanese media, organisers said.

Kim, leader of the 35-member North Korean delegation, arrived here last Wednesday for an eight-day visit at the invitation of Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party and the largest opposition Social Democratic Party of Japan.

Kim is the highest-ranking North Korean official to visit Tokyo since Japan's 35-year colonial rule of Korea ended at the close of World War II.

He said Japan should compensate North Korea for freezing relations since then, but indicated flexibility on how reparations could be arranged, according to the liberal Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

"Whether the 35-year (colonial) compensation comes first, and the 45-year (postwar com-

## High-rise fire brought under control in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A high-rise inferno that burned for almost 19 hours was brought under control Sunday after killing three firefighters and gutting at least nine floors of a 33-story skyscraper.

The 12-alarm blaze raged from 8:30 p.m. Saturday (0130 GMT Sunday) until 3 p.m. (1900 GMT Sunday), when it reached a floor with automatic sprinklers and firefighters were able to direct a stream of water into window, fire commissioner Roger M. Ulshefer said.

Hours earlier, fire crews stopped fighting the blaze from inside the building after engineers warned the charred and soot-covered high rise could collapse.

The city's main downtown intersection, the traffic circle where Philadelphia's two major arteries loop around City Hall, was closed.

The three firefighters killed apparently became disoriented in heavy smoke and ran out of oxygen from their portable tanks, Ulshefer said.

At least 12 other firefighters were injured. Two were hospitalised in stable condition.

The fire started on the 22nd floor and spread to the 30th floor, where sprinklers were triggered. The building was only partially equipped with sprinklers, with none on the 22nd through the 29th floors, Ulshefer said.

The battle was complicated by failures in the building's electrical system, backup generators and water pumping system, Ulshefer said. Elevators couldn't be used, so firefighters had to stretch hoses by hand to the 22nd floor, he said.

"By the time we got them up there and got enough water, the fire was three floors above our heads," Ulshefer said.

During the late morning, flames were visible from the 27th through the 29th floors as firefighters sprayed jets of water from a nearby office tower. All or portions of the 22nd through the 30th floors were gutted.

No adjoining buildings caught fire, Ulshefer said.

Police kept a crowd of onlookers more than a block away because windows occasionally popped from the intense heat, sending debris clattering more than 250 feet (75 metres) to the street. Smoke billowed from the upper stories and an acrid odor spread throughout the city.

The building houses the Philadelphia regional headquarters of reading-based Meridian Bancorp Inc. and several other offices.

## Roh collected secret political funds — opposition

SEOUL (AP) — South Korea's main opposition party Monday accused President Roh Tae-woo's office of collecting illegal political funds. Hundreds of radical students staged violent protests demanding that Roh resign because of a growing bribery scandal.

"There is general public suspicion that a huge sum of political funds appears to be funneled into the Blue House (Roh's office)," the opposition Party for Peace and Democracy said in a statement.

The statement did not mention Roh by name but accused his government of corruption. It claimed Roh's office played a key role in a major bribery scandal.

The scandal, the largest since Roh took office in 1988, has seriously eroded the image of the governing Democratic Liberal Party (DLP).

Nine people, including a presidential aide and five legislators, have been arrested on charges of accepting (\$1.4 million) in bribes to help get construction permits for a developer to build a housing project in a restricted area surrounding Seoul.

The opposition party asked Roh to disclose facts surrounding the scandal or face popular protests. The statement came after dissidents announced a plan for nationwide protest rallies in March.

In Seoul, some 7,500 riot police were deployed on streets and

around major university campuses Monday to stop protests.

Scattered clashes erupted outside two schools in Seoul and two other provincial campuses.

At Seoul's Kukmin University, about 200 students burned an American flag and battled riot police, shouting "let's overthrow (President) Roh Tae-woo." They also shouted anti-U.S. slogans.

Hundreds of students shouting similar slogans staged hit-and-run protests in downtown Seoul.

The students accused Roh of being subservient to the United States in accepting U.S. requests for donations to allied forces fighting Iraq. They demanded and end to "aggression by U.S. imperialists in the Gulf war."

Opposition activists contend that Roh has been collecting political slush funds to help his party win elections and retain power. Roh faces local assembly elections this year and balloting in the next two years for the presidency and parliament.

Roh has fired two cabinet ministers and made a nationally televised apology for the scandal but that has failed to allay mounting public anger.

Roh has tried to close the case, but the scandal widened again over the weekend when three top leaders of the governing party were found to have signed a document supporting the illegal housing project.

## Former Bulgarian president goes on trial

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria's ousted Communist President Todor Zhivkov became the first former East Bloc leader to go on public trial Monday when he appeared in court on charges of embezzlement.

Zhivkov, pushed from power by members of his own government 15 months ago, is accused of siphoning millions of dollars from public funds to buy luxury apartments, Western cars and other privileges for his family and favoured friends.

Despite rumours of ill-health, and crowds of hecklers shouting "killers," the rotund 79-year-old leader appeared alert and cheerful, grinning and waving at photographers as he was escorted by police into Sofia's Supreme Court.

For some, Zhivkov's arrival in a high-speed police cavalcade seemed a parody of the grand entrances he made when in power.

"Just like in the good old days, Zhivkov has arrived escorted by police cars with blue lights, sirens and loudspeakers demanding that the street be cleared," a radio reporter commented.

Smartly dressed in a blue pinstriped suit and tie, Zhivkov shook hands with his former right-hand man Milko Balev, who is accused of misappropriating funds officially given to publish Zhivkov's writings.

Both men sat calmly as the prosecution read a lengthy indictment with charges ranging from offering Western cars at discount prices to officials' wives and friends to extra payment given to favourite air stewards.

Zhivkov, who with 35 years in power was Eastern Europe's longest serving leader, has denied the charges and accused his former colleagues of using him as a scapegoat.

If convicted, he could be sentenced to up to 20 years in jail.

The trial has been met by a mixture of curiosity and scepticism by Bulgarians currently grappling with food shortages and huge price rises as the first non-Communist government in four decades tries to introduce a market economy.

Many people expect the former leader to use the trial to incriminate former party colleagues who still wield considerable power as leaders of the renamed Socialist Party.

But leading opposition figures complain that the charges of embezzlement skirt the major political abuses during Zhivkov's rule.

They say these include a campaign to assimilate the country's large ethnic Turkish minority in the mid-1980s and devastation of the country's economy.

Zhivkov's defence lawyer, who failed to persuade the court to adjourn the case for lack of evidence, said the former leader would have preferred a political trial.

"I think that this is the only thing he wants, but our law does not provide for political crimes," lawyer Rani Tsanova told reporters.

Zhivkov is the first ousted Communist leader in Eastern Europe to be brought to public trial.

## Thai coup leaders pledge caretaker government

BANGKOK (AP) — A provisional government will be set up within days, the head of the military junta that overthrew Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan's elected administration said Monday.

Police, meanwhile, arrested 14 students at Bangkok's Ramkhamhaeng University protesting Saturday's apparently bloodless coup. No further details on the arrests were immediately available.

Armed Forces Commander Gen. Sunthorn Kongsompong said the military rulers "have already discussed the setting up of the provisional government, and soon we will announce it... it may be five days, seven days."

Sunthorn, who took power along with five other top officers, said the provisional government would not be dominated by soldiers.

"We will take people who have real knowledge and experience... and they must be persons accepted by the general public," he said.

Foreign policy and the economy would be top priorities, he said. On Sunday, the rebels said the country's foreign policy would not change.

However, despite the junta's pledges on the economy, there was panic selling Monday on Thailand's stock exchange in the first day of trading since the coup.

According to preliminary figures, the main index of the stock exchange of Thailand plunged more than seven per cent, closing more than 57 points down from Friday's close of 791.64.

"People are panicking because of the military takeover," said an analyst at Securities One Ltd., who did not want to be named.

Sunthorn said the junta would become an advisory body to the provisional government and would dissolve itself after elections are held.

The junta, including the chiefs of all the armed forces, has pledged to return the country to democracy as soon as possible.

Army chief Gen. Suchinda Krapayoon, the junta's no. 2

## Castro wants 'vaccine against capitalism'

HAVANA (R) — Cuban President Fidel Castro, defending Socialist Cuba's progress in health and education, said Sunday his country's scientists would develop a vaccine against capitalism. "Use capitalist methods. That would be crazy," Castro told a Communist Party meeting in Havana. "We ought to develop a vaccine against the madness that is capitalism," he added jokingly. The Cuban leader said capitalism had not been able to solve human and social problems like prostitution, drug-addiction, social alienation or poverty. Neither had it brought social justice. "Capitalism has nothing to offer the world," he added. Castro said that in capitalist countries there was "every day more degeneracy, more sex, more vice, more violence." He said health and education standards in Cuba were among the highest in the developing world and better than those of some developed nations.

## China produces karaoke disc of revolutionary songs

HONG KONG (R) — Two Chinese companies have produced a karaoke disc of revolutionary songs from the period of the late Chairman Mao Tseung, the Hong Kong-based China News Service said. The Karaoke, or sing-along, record includes 25 hits with titles such as The Bright Red Sun and Chairman Mao Is My Dearest and Sing A Folk Song For The Chinese Communist Party, the Peking-funded agency said Sunday. It said The Glorious Path disc has "a positive influence in reinforcing the national revolutionary spirit of self-entertaining activities like karaoke." China has recently revived revolutionary operas with much success, with the Red Lantern playing to full houses when it opened last month.

## Man jailed for 22 'bikerbank' robberies

TEL AVIV (AP) — Wealthy socialist Roni Leibowitz was sentenced Monday to 20 years in prison for a string of 22 bank robberies that earned him fame as Israel's "bikerbank." Israel Radio said. The armed robberies stretched over nearly two years, and police had trouble identifying the robber whose trademark was firing a single shot in the air and escaping on a motorcycle. His derring-do made him almost a cult figure, with T-shirts and bumper stickers issued in his honour. Tel Aviv district court Judge Victoria Astrovsky Cohen said Leibowitz had wasted police time and money and had a destructive effect on society, Israel Radio said. "He was a harmful influence on Israeli youth who saw him as a hero," the radio quoted her as saying. "He was living the Robin Hood myth, except here the money went into his pocket." A three-judge panel headed by Ms. Cohen ordered the 20-year sentence, which is the maximum for robbery. Israel Radio said the defence planned to appeal the sentence. Leibowitz, 37, was arrested on Oct. 18 and later confessed to the bank robberies in which he took about 350,000 shekels (\$175,000). News reports said he was from a wealthy family and that a lavish lifestyle had gotten him deeply in debt.

## Where's the beef?

NEW DELHI (AP) — A fundamentalist Hindu group angered by the sale of "beef" in a five-star hotel called off its protest after a hotel executive said only buffalo meat was being served. About 200 members of the Bajrang Dal picketed Le Meridien Hotel after advertisements for a British food festival billed beef fillet and Yorkshire pudding among the culinary attractions. The cow is considered holy in the Hindu religion, and the sale of beef is banned throughout most of India, where Hindus make up 82 per cent of the population of 880 million. Buffaloes are not considered sacred. Kanwal Mehra, a senior hotel executive, told the protesters his hotel "has never served beef and will never serve beef." Asked about the advertisement, another executive said: "If we called it a buffalo fillet, do you think anyone would have eaten it?"

## Albania prepares for first free election

KUCOVA, Albania (AP) — Oil workers in what once was Stalin city, a showpiece of Communist industry, loiter in the shadows of nearly empty overhead pipelines that twist among dusty palm trees and crumbling apartment blocks.

Like many other state-run enterprises in this tiny Balkan nation, the Qyteti-Stalin Refinery runs only sporadically for lack of supplies.

Whether the employees work or not, the Communist government makes sure they are paid. It wants their support next month in the first free election since the party took over in 1944.

Officials acknowledge economic problems undermined public faith and led to strikes in January, but say stocks of food and raw materials are sufficient to last until the election on March 31.

"The economic situation at present is very dangerous and that has been reflected in a crisis of belief," said Spiro Dede, a Central Committee secretary.

Thousands of Albanians released decades of pent-up wrath against Communist rule Wednesday, toppling huge statues of Enver Hoxha in Tirana, the capital; Dures in the Adriatic; and Korca in southeastern Albania. Hoxha, a Stalinist, founded Albania and ruled it with stern isolationism until his death in 1985.

Conservative and older Albanians, who revere Hoxha as a World War II hero and the founder of communist Albania, have struck back recently. Some rallied in Hoxha's birthplace Sunday to demand that the government ban the opposition Democratic Party and bang its leaders.

President Ramzi Alia has urged calm and announced that he would take power into his own hands and form a new Presidential Council to govern.

Josif Vello, a 29-year-old oil worker in Kucova, supports the new Democratic Party even though the government pays him for idleness.

Vello spends four to six weeks on the job three or four times a year. He has been at home since January, collecting 80 per cent of his regular pay.

Only a few rigs and wells are operating in the jungle of rusting derricks around Kucova. The Communists renamed the town for the Soviet dictator, but its original name was restored in January, after popular pressure forced the government to dismantle the Stalin personality cult.

Worn drill bits have hit rock in the oil fields. Deeper drilling depends on the arrival of Western money and technology.

Vello and his wife Mimoza, who teaches English, share a tiny two-

room apartment with his mother and live on a combined monthly income of 1,200 lek, about \$120.

Democratic Party support comes mainly from younger people in urban centres like Tirana; the port of Dures; Shkoder in the north; and Elbasan, a central city. Older people and villagers appear more likely to back the Communists, whose official name is the Party of Labour.

About 65 per cent of Albania's 3.2 million people live in rural areas, but the average age, 27, is Europe's lowest.

"My friends are very interested in the Democratic Party and very pleased about pluralism, but people are in doubt" about the unknown experience of elections, Vello said.

The party was born after student protests in December caused Alia to reverse 16 years of Stalinist practice and legalise non-Communist parties.

Three other opposition groups have been formed — the Republican, Peasant and Ecology parties — but the main contest for the 250-seat People's Assembly will be between the Democrats and Communists.

"Young people are for the Democrats," said Mimoza Vello. "Our parents' generation will probably vote for the Party of

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